

INDIAN POETICS AND WESTERN THOUGHT

Edited by

M. S. KUSHWAHA



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PREFACE

This book is designed to assess the achievement and relevance of Indian poetics in the light of western critical thought. It is as much addressed to Sanskrit scholars as to the scholars of English. While the former will have an opportunity of looking into the viability of their traditional literary theories in the present context, the latter will learn something from a rich heritage they have so far neglected.

Unfortunately, in India, there has long been a wide chasm between the Sanskrit and the English scholars. For this Indian scholars of English are more to blame than Sanskrit scholars who have, at least, made sincere efforts to reach out to them through English translations and interpetations of Sanskrit texts. It was they who, puffed up with their new western learning, prided themselves on disowning the rich literary tradition they were born in. They looked down on Sanskrit, which embodies Indian cultural heritage, as 'untouchable'; it was to them a symbol of their 'backwardness' of which they were rather ashamed. For them western scholarship constituted the be-all and the end-all of all knowledge.[1] Even after the independence, their attitude, though softened, has not radically changed; majority of them still suffer from mental slavery. They are proud of owing their allegiance to Aristotle and Eliot rather than Bharata and Ānandavardhana. They can prescribe English translations of Greek and Roman critics in the post-graduate courses on 'criticism' but will not allow English translations of Sanskrit critics, though there is no justification for making such a discrimination. They do not realize that criticism, as Matthew Arnold said long ago, is after all 'a disinterested endeavour to learn and propogate the best that is known and thought in the world.'[2]

1. There was a time, as Professor V.K. Gokak observes (*English in India*, p. 3), when Indian Professors of English 'measured all literary expression by the English yardstick and found no literary excellence outside English masterpieces.'
2. 'Functions of Criticism at the Present Times', *Essays in Criticism*, First Series.

Notwithstanding such an exclusive and persistent devotion to the West, Indian scholars of English have not succeeded in making their mark on western academia. For instance, *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature : A Guide for Readers* (1984), which may be taken as a fairly representative record of modern British opinion, includes hardly more than a dozen names of Indian scholars, and that too, mostly in the field of Indian writing in English. That this is not an unusually harsh or prejudiced view is borne out by confessions of our own scholars. 'Literary criticism by the Indo-Anglians,' says Professor K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, 'is almost unescapably derivative and imitative.'[3] He adds further, with a note of pessimism, that 'the best they can do in this field is bound to look insignificant, and even puerile, by the side of the works of criticism that are being produced in English universities.'[4] Even our research-work in English, to quote Professor V. K. Gokak, is 'hardly anything more than a collection of available critical data and contribution, not to knowledge, but to a whole heap of type-scripts piled up in a university library.'[5]

What is the cause of such a pathetic state of Indian scholarship in English ? Why is it that 'our long study of English,' as Professor S. Nagarajan points out,' had not produced any Indian school of literary criticism ?'[6] Why is our literary criticism in English. we must ask ourselves, condemned to remain a foot-note to western scholarship? Professor Nagarajan thinks that this is all due to our inability to develop an 'inwardness' to the English language or to get 'over its alien culture'.[7] May be he is right, but the question is whether such an 'inwardness' to a foreign language or culture (with which a language is inextricably linked) is really possible. Is not such an attempt, by its very

3. *Indo-Anglian Literature* (Bombay, 1943), p. 55.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
5. *English in India : Its Present and Future* (New York, 1964), p. 143.
6. 'The Literary Criticism of Sri Aurobindo', *Indian Literature of the Last Fifty Years, 1917-1967*, ed. C. D. Narasimhaiah (Mysore, 1970), p. 312.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

nature, foredoomed to failure? For even if one acquires this 'inwardness', which is well-nigh impossible, one can never compare with those who are born and brought up in that language. In fact, this is a mis-conceived and mis-directed pursuit, of which our English scholars have all through been easy victims. They have failed to realize that this is nothing but striving after *paradharma* against which the *Gita* (III. 35) warns us in unequivocal terms : 'Better is one's own *dharma* (*svadharma*), however imperfect, than the *dharma* of another (*paradharma*) carried out perfectly. Better is death in (the fulfilment of) one's own *dharma*, for to follow another's *dharma* is perilous.' For, one can be only what one is; one cannot become another by any effort. Such an effort would ultimately undermine one's own potentialities which alone could have been developed. All this is amply proved by the poverty and inferiority of Indian criticism in English which has so far gone this way.

Now what we need is a turn to the other way round—from *paradharma* to *svadharma*, from Anglomania to *metanoia*. We will have to relate to our roots, to our soil, to our intellectual and cultural tradition. We can create genuine literature or genuine criticism only out of what actually belongs to us, not what we have borrowed from others. This is perhaps what Edmund Gosse meant when he advised Sarojini Naidu to make her poetry out 'of some revelation of India'. The history of Indian creative writing in English also shows that it could gain international recognition only when it ceased imitating the West and stood on its own. That is, when Indian creative writers in English started writing as Indians, and not as Englishmen or Europeans. This is precisely what *svadharma* means.

Indian criticism in English has yet to learn this lesson. So far it has depended entirely on western critical thinking, whose concepts and ideas have guided its course. This focus has to change if it wishes to establish its identity and become a genuine and authentic voice. It will have to ground itself in its own intellectual and aesthetic tradition which alone can provide it real sustenance. It does not mean, however, that Indian critical

writing in English will sever its ties with western critical tradition. It is neither possible nor desirable. All that is intended is that Indian criticism in English, while benefitting from western insights and speculations, should possess a distinctive Indian perspective. This we can develop only when we study and explore Indian aesthetics, specially Indian poetics, with the same devotion and penetration that we are used to accord to western literary criticism.

The present volume is just a modest step in this direction. Here, for the first time, some of our leading scholars of English are brought together to discuss the various aspects of Indian poetics from the occidental viewpoint which represents, by and large, what we call modern thinking. The emphasis is laid here on critical examination rather than simple exegesis or exposition, and the universe of discourse extends beyond the confines of Indian thinkers. Though this is not exactly a comparative study, there are frequent comparisons and references to western theoreticians and critics. The intention is to find out how far Indian poetics can compete with western literary thought which has almost swamped the Indian mind.

The book is roughly divided into three sections. The first section, comprising the first five essays, consists of general comparisons between Indian poetics and western literary criticism. The second, consisting of the next nine essays, includes critical and comparative studies of major theories and concepts of Indian poetics. The last one, which includes the last two essays, is addressed to the question of applicability of Indian poetics to interpretation and appreciation of western literature.

The preparation of such a volume has not been an easy task. I was not only hampered by the paucity of such scholars of English as were sufficiently conversant with Sanskrit poetics but was also hamstrung in my selection of essays by the well-defined character of the work. I had to choose from a very narrow circle, and that too, without compromising on any of the norms. It was quite a difficult job. Sometimes the scholars (whose number is so small that one can hardly make any choice)

had no time or inclination to write fresh essays and sometimes the essays submitted by them were not in point. When, even after my best and continued efforts, I failed to procure the required number of fresh articles, I did not hesitate in including a few from books and periodicals too. What matters here is the overall view that the book presents, not the novelty of its individual essays. Recognition, rather than surprise, is its goal.

The book is more in the nature of a curtain-raiser than a well-wrought treatise. It is intended to draw the attention of our English scholars and linguisticians to a field which has yet been tilled but a little. It is on them, rather than orientalists, that the burden of cultivating it lies, for it is they who can make Indian poetics intelligible to the West by presenting it in their own idiom. They can serve as a bridge between the East and the West, and their efforts, in due course, may pave the way for a global history of literary criticism in which Indian poetics occupies a prominent place.

The credit for the success of this venture goes to the contributors who all responded to my requests very generously. Even those who were not able to write fresh papers permitted me to reprint their old but pertinent compositions. As I did not wish to make any distinction between the published and the unpublished, I have not pointed out, except in a few cases, the sources of the essays included here. The new *gestalt* of which they are parts renders their geneology superfluous.

I am thankful to the publishers and other agencies for allowing me to make use of some of the material first published by them.

My thanks are also due to Mr. O. P. Grover for taking up the publication of this work in a missionary spirit.

Department of English
Lucknow University
Lucknow-226007

M. S. Kushwaha

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Department of English, M. S. [illegible]
Lucknow University
Lucknow-226007

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K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar

INDIAN POETICS AND WESTERN AESTHETICS SOME REFLECTIONS

It used to be said (perhaps it is occasionally affirmed even today) that, before mid-nineteenth century, we hadn't in India anything like literary criticism in the Western sense of the term. But even if we should ignore all the classics of Sanskrit in this field from Bharata and Bhāmaha, through Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, to Viśvanātha and Jagannātha, and ignore too all the exegetical literature in Sanskrit, Tamil and other languages of India, it must still be clear that without the exercise of sound self-evaluation at some level or other, so much good—so much great—literature could not have been produced in India since the Vedic and the early Sangum periods; and without a capacity for the experience and enjoyment of poetry (*Kāvyānubhava* and *Kāvyānanda*) in the people, such an impressive body of literature in a variety of languages, including folk literature in the oral traditions, could not have survived through the ages. If Bhārat is *dharma-bhūmi* and *puṇya-bhūmi,* Bhārat is also *Kāvya-bhūmi.* Poetry is in the air almost, and we breathe it although we may not be always aware of it.

During the last 100 or 150 years in India, we have been exposed—or we have exposed ourselves–to Western literature and criticism, the two taken together at first. Then came a revival of interest in our own literature, and we came upon new lights and insights, and new mists and hindsights, as a result of our schooling in Western literature and criticism. By the side of the *Iliad,* the *Rāmāyaṇa* seemed shapeless, and the *Mahābhārata* even more so. There was Kalidasa of course, and Goethe had praised *Abhijnāna-Śākuntalam.* Kalidasa, then, was our Shakespeare, the Indian Shakespeare. It tickled our ears, and the appetite grew with what it fed on. Michael Madhusudan Dutt was the Indian Milton, Bharati the Indian Shelley, Hari Narayan Apte the Indian Sir Walter Scott, Fakir Mohan Senapati the Indian Dickens. Textual criticism dissected literary specimens and examined them

under the microscope, and the result was the discovery of as many authors of the *Gita* as of Shakespeare's sonnets. The historicity of the Rama story was questioned, and the *Sundar Kānd,* held in near universal veneration, was described by one writer as puerile puranic balderdash. If the *Mahābhārata* was studied and found wanting in the light of Aristotle's poetics, if the absence of Tragedy (except perhaps in *Ūrubhanga* and *Nāgānanda*) in Sanskrit drama had to be reluctantly conceded, it was soothing to our self-respect to know that Rama's banishment on the very day fixed for his coronation and Sita's abduction by Ravana at the very time she was expecting the return of Rama with the golden deer were tragic situations as perfect as the *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone* of Sophocles.

Nay more: if classical Indian literature gained in significance when scrutinised under the Aristotelian torchlight, why not read Shakespeare and Spenser, Shaw and Eliot, Eugene O'Neill and Wallace Stevens, in the light of the *Nātyaśāstra* and *Dhvanyāloka* ? Critics have looked for and found the Aristotelian hamartia, perepeteia, anagnorisis and katharsis in the *Ayodhya Kānda* and *Aranya Kānda.* Wasn't Dasaratha's or Rama's uxoriousness the hamartia that set the tragic action moving ? But Valmiki knew nothing of the Greek concept of Tragedy or of hamartia, perepeteia or katharsis; and indeed Sophocles himself wasn't exactly thinking of them when he wrote his great tragedies. We might try if we liked to bring the insights of the *rasa-dhavani* theory to the study of Western literature, but like inferring hamartia and katharsis in *Śākuntalam* or *Silappa-dhikaram,* that too would be largely an intellectual exercise, interesting no doubt, but not necessarily leading to any fresh illumination or enhancing the quality of the poetic enjoyment. The humourless application–Procrustes fashion–of the critical categories evolved long ago in one cultural milieu is neither desirable, nor is it likely to yield fruitful results. If Shakespeare *via* Bradley is one removed from reality, Shakespeare *via* the *Nātyaśāstra* might prove to be twice removed from reality. Better read Shakespeare himself.

The first difficulty with the key concepts of Western or Indian aesthetics or poetics is their connotative ambiguity.

'Define your terms!' is an old adage, but this is not always or intelligibly done. The Western concepts of mimesis and katharsis on the one hand and the Indian concepts of *rasa* and *dhvani* on the other–to choose only two pairs—lure us with their apparent transparency, only to tease us presently with their coiled or saddled ambiguities. We start with the notion that the artist or poet is engaged in 'mimesis' or 'imitation'. Already in Plato's *Republic* the word is used so as to imply derogation. If God be the creator of the ideal bed, if the carpenter is the maker of the wooden bed in imitation of the ideal, then the painter but makes a copy of this imitation. Likewise, Socrates is made to argue that the tragedian, the poet, too is twice removed from reality. Art, poetry, is but imitation, xeroxcopy, mimicry, apery and therefore far removed from reality, from the original. What, then, is the use of poetry?

But Aristotle, coming late, gives a new dimension to the doctrine of mimesis. What has obviously pejorative implications in Plato acquires a philosophical accent in Aristotle. For him, poetry is more philosophical and serious than history, which is a mere record of the past. Poetry seizes quintessence, and highlights and universalises it by freeing it from the slavery to place and time. Also, poetry prefers impossible probabilities to improbable possibilities, and such present ion is not the lesser but the higher reality. Poetry penetrates the crust of mere appearance, the raw actuality, and infers and images the inner causation, and imparts form and meaning to what is seemingly chaotic and bewildering.

Between Aristotle and his later commentators theory of mimesis acquires aesthetic as well as ethical dimensions. Plato had used the 'mimesis' stick both to downgrade poetry as third-hand, and to castigate it as something that stimulates immoral, violent and abnormal behaviour. Aristotle's answer is that poetry is a uniquely significant rendering of life and not just crude imitation, and far from being immoral, poetry is an imaging and picturing that embodies a completion and fulfilment of Nature. In other words, poetry is a portrait of significant reality or of unfolding probability, rather than an apery of current actuality or mechanical possibility. Between the exteremes

of the Platonic and the Aristotelian views, 'mimesis' has now come to acquire many shades of meaning. There is, however, no getting away from the need to establish some sort of relationship between 'life' as we ordinarily see it or experience it and 'life' as we find it presented in art and literature. Of course your finding would depend on which type of art or literature, and which particular work, you are examining; and on your background, and on the reigning mood, and on the deeper predilections, and the philosophical and emotional presuppositions as well. It is alas! not easy to cast an algebraic equation relating literature and life. Literature as escape, literature as titillation, literature as idealisation, literature as sublimation, literature as a criticism of life, literature as a means of *sādhanā*-all have their respective mansions in the House of Literature. The same portraiture of Sita in the *Rāmāyana* which evokes in many an Indian admiration on this side of idolatry only provoked the egregious William Archer to declare that Sita is so excessive in her virtue, so obsessive in her fidelity and chastity, 'as to verge on immorality.' This again provoked Sri Aurobindo to castigate Archer as follows: 'Meaningless smart extravagance has reached its highest point when it can thus verge on the idiotic.' When the response proceeds from a total ignorance or a wilful ignoration of the spirit and motivation behind a type of artistic creation, and fastens upon the external details only and judges in the light of a quite different spirit and motivation, naturally enough the responses, conclusions or judgements are bound to be wide of the mark. The fact is, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out,

> 'the Indian mind in its natural poise finds it almost or quite difficult really, that is to say, spiritually to understand the arts of Europe, as the ordinary European mind to enter into rhe spirit of Indian painting and sculpture.'

This applies no less to literature, except with people happily endowed, or with people willing to steep themselves in the Hellenic mind, or the Renaissance mind, or the ancient Indian mind, or the contemporary mind, as the case may be.

Even so, however studiously we steep ourselves in the Hellenic, Renaissance, ancient Indian or the modern mind, however ingeniously we handle the analytical instruments, however methodically we engage in classification, elucidation and interpretation, poetic creation and poetic enjoyment alike involve so many imponderables differing from person to person, time to time, that it is impossible to pluck the heart of the mystery and reduce it to a universal formula. Even people brought up in the same cultural milieu differ in subtle ways in their response to a work of literature. We have seen how, while accepting the principle of 'mimesis,' different critics nevertheless mean different things by it. Superficially Plato is right : poetry is words, unlike the the flesh and blood of actual life, or the immaculate model in the realm of ideas. And Aristotle is right too: poetry apparently trafficks with imitation, mimicry, appearance, but really reveals the truth behind the appearance, the face behind the mask, the music behind the mimicry, the universality behind the local and the temporal.

Let us turn now to the Indian concept of *rasa*. Art is certainly not the same thing as raw actuality; art–poetry–brings out the *rasa* of raw experience. Poetry is more than words, according to Viśvanātha, poetry is speech whose soul is *rasa (vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam)*. Poetry is the recordation of the significance or quintessence of life, as Aristotle might have put it.

But *rasa*–what exactly is *rasa* ? On the face of it, here is an attempt to translate or elevate a culinary or dietic phenomenon to the aesthetic realm. 'Tomato rasam' is well within the range of our everyday experience. But how about *karuṇa rasa*, which is said to permeate the vast spaces of the *Rāmāyana*? Valmiki is supposed to have experienced a sudden surge of *karuṇā* or pity in a certain situation (the anguish of a female bird on the killing of the male by a hunter), and gave this emotion an epic body and charged it with a unique power; and in the result, the *Rāmāyana* does something to the reader, or the hearer, and *karuṇā* wells up in his heart. *Karuṇa rasa* is thus both the cause and the effect of the poetic marvel, the *Rāmāyana*.

So far it is plain sailing. But when we try, as in a chemistry laboratory, to analyse *rasa* in general or one *rasa* in particular into its ingredients, or try to explore or expose the process of *rasa* fermentation, we necessarily deploy the tools of analysis and rationalisation in a field that transcends such exercises. According to Bhaiata, *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhichāri* or *sanchāribhāvas* distil into *rasa*. What does this mean ? How shall we translate it into English ? One writer says that antecedent causes are *vibhāvas*, while consequent manifestations are *anubhāvas*; 'if *vibhāvas* are to be considered as the generators of the *sthāyibhāvas*, the *anubhāvas* are the effects arising out of them directly'. Another says that primary, secondary and temporary emotions or feelings, stirring and acting upon the subliminal feelings, emerge at last as unified *rasa*. Or, to vary the verbiage, shall we say that the exciting, the ensuant and the accessory (or ancillary) feelings arouse the native potentiality so as to produce the relevant *rasa* ? Of course we know that when ripe tomatoes and salt and chilli-powder are seasoned with assafoetida and mustard and what you have, and all are properly mixed and boiled in water, we get the popular dish known as 'rasam'; and a like process with pepper substituted for chilli gives us 'mulagatawney'. Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy puts it slightly differently: 'Just as several spices jointly go to heighten the taste of each in a dish, in the same manner the *bhāvas* together with *abhinaya* (in drama) go to heighten the *rasas*'. But in the interior kitchen of human psychology, it is neither possible nor prudent to be equally specific. Even after reading Krishna Chaitanya's rendering—

> 'When the prime stimuli, their congruent behavioural features and the transient but ancillary emotional reactions they evoke combine to activate the sentiment, the sentiment develops into aesthetic emotion'–

I don't think the mind is less befuddled than before.

Yet anothor explication was attempted in 1958 by the late Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, when he gave a course of lectures, which I attended, in Andhra University on 'The Tragic in Shakespearian

and Sanskrit Drama'. A situation, be it tragic or comic, is a complex of *vibhāva* (character), *anubhāva* (action), and *vyabhichārin* (reaction). Once the *sthāyibhāva* or situation has been activated as above, from such a dynamic situation emerges *rasa*, which Dr. Raja explained as 'enjoyability' or the peculiar beauty of art or the distinctive taste of poetry that makes such enjoyability inevitable.

Poetry after all rises out of life, or out of life-situations but poetry is not brazen or slavish imitation. What is seized and seasoned is life's quintessence, the coiled reality, the secreted *élan* or *rasa*, which of course is variable in quality and intensity, ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime, the farcical to the tragic. Perhaps beyond tragedy too.

But while *rasa* may be an elusive, ineluctable phenomenon, it has nevertheless to be embodied in and communicated through the medium of language to deserve the name of poetry. When Lewis Caroll said in *Alice in Wonderland,* 'Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves', and when the French poet Mallarmé said, 'poetry is written with words, not with ideas', they were looking at two arcs of the same circle. The poet's medium is the rhythmic word, and the evocation of the *rasa* of some experience is to be brought about by the creative use of language. Just as the phenomenal world of Appearance is mere shadow-play and not the Reality beyond change, so too the words we commonly use are but pale reflections of the wordless *anāhata nāda*, the imperishable immaculate *sphoṭa*. It is the poet's task to project the ideal world of limit by approximating his language to the native purity and power of the *sphoṭa*. Beyond the ordinary prose denotation of the words Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka called *abhidhāyakatvam*, there is *bhāvakatvam*, the power of words to explore quintessence or to release the springs of universality. One may almost say that it is moving from the Platonic to the Aristotelian view of mimesis in poetry. But Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka mentions a still higher power, *bhojakatva*, the power to uncongeal our frozen sensibilities, and to ordain a deeper harmony and *ānanda*. Information, instruction, correction, edification, moral upliftment are not the

real aim of poetry, although it may carry any or all of these in its stride. At its highest reaches, in its loftiest utterance, poetry should induce a condition of peace, of the bliss of fulfilment; in other words, of *kāvyānanda* which is not essentially different from *brahmānanda.* But which *rasika*, which literary critic, can find words adequate enough to describe the magic quality, the rich serenity, of this *ānanda* ? I am reminded of Tirumoolar's disarming verse:

> *The vistas revealed to the inner eye*
> *lead on to Beatitude.*
> *But how describe this Bliss to another?*
> *When questioned by her daughter,*
> *How is the mother to delineate*
> *the rapture of nuptial love?*

Art or poetry *is* something, and *does* something to us. We have seen that it is not mere imitation, or just a devaluation of life; it is an imaging of a segment of reality, a fresh creation as it were, and touched with universal significance. As regards Plato's complaint that poetry stirs up the irrational or as (we should say today) the dark waters of the unconscious, and hence it is an undesirable and even an immoral influence, Aristotle took it seriously enough to put forward his own theory of katharsis. It may sound elevating to say that the purest or finest poetry gives us unsullied joy. But where is *ānanda* in a tale of crime and punishment and more crime, as in the *Oresteia* or the Theban trilogy? Why should people be exposed to the accumulation of horrors in a play like *Macbeth* or *King Lear*? The terror and the pity in an *Antigone* or an *Othelio* is obvious enough. The rejection of Śakuntalā is painful, and even her later reunion with Dushyanta doesn't quite make up for the earlier shock and misery. When Kannagi learns of Kovalan's death, she is for a while the very image of anguish and despair. Now, while there may be similar situations in actual life, the question is why we should be made to confront them again in literature, if anything, with the horror made more horrible still?

Aristotle must have had the Platonic or normal human objections in mind when, in the course of his celebrated definition he said that Tragedy aimed at 'effecting through pity and terror

the proper katharsis of these emotions'. If *rasa* is drawn from dietics, katharsis is from medicine. But what precisely is katharsis? Numerous are the interpretations of this technical term. One set of meanings—purgation, menstruation, elimination, abreaction—would imply that what Tragedy does is to administer some sort of castor-oil treatment, as did Mussolini to his political enemies. Tragedy functions like a laxative—aperient; and rids the psychological system of its excessive susceptibility to the emotions, especially pity and terror. But, then, is the theatre a hospital, queried F. L. Lucas. Is poetry no more than castor oil-perfumed, perhaps, yet castor oil all the same in substance and in its effect? As distinct from the Hippocratic metaphor implying the necessary ejection of something deemed to be harmful, there is also the notion of correction, purification, sublimation–Tragedy being a kind of psychological shock therapy to effect the desired change and transformation. But this turns the theatre into a confessional, and Tragedy into a religious ritual or ethical discipline. Perhaps what Tragedy does is to temper, to moderate–to inject a distaste for excess. Might it not be that katharsis somehow implies aesthetic depersonalisation ? Does katharsis mean the balancing of the impulses of pity and terror–the impulse to approach balanced by the impulse to retreat ? Does it mean the induction of a vital causality ? Or the calm that follows an orgy of sadism and masochism? If one were to explore all the semantic ramifications of the concept, one must in the end be seized with utter bewilderment.

In desperation we should, perhaps, turn to Bhaṭṭa Tauta, who was Abhinavagupta's own Guru. Of course Bhaṭṭa Tauta didn't know about katharsis, but when he says that, just as dust is used to clean up a rusted mirror, the mind of the *rasika* is purified of passions through passion itself. Bhaṭṭa Tauta throws some needed light on the way Tragedy or the tragic in poetry acts upon the audience or the reader. The whole question of what Tragedy or poetry does to us, what is the nature of the induced pain, and the delight that surges out of the pain itself, compels reference to the realm of experimental psychology, and each *sahrdaya* must pose the question to himself, re-enact the passion in the theare

of his heart, and experience the beyonding of the passion in the triumph of Resurrection. What is it that makes a good cricket match or game of tennis such an exciting, satisfying, rewarding experience to the players as well as the spectators ? There is continual exertion on the part of the players, and for the spectators there is both the thrill of excitement and the agony of suspense. Yet somehow the totality of the experience distils into a rare delight. To confront, to endure, to exceed, to transcend the clash of opposites, the vicissitudes of the struggle, and safely to come through it all—this plunging into a flood of exciting experience and beyonding it firmly, at once tired and refreshed, this might perhaps take us closer to the secret of Tragedy and tragic delight. The exhausting and exhilarating passage across the flood to the other shore becomes itself an invigorating experience, and pity and terror are exceeded by the heroism and the endurance. In Tragedy, we do not go in for pity and terror or other emotions as such (we have plenty of these in real life), but rather for the *rasa* of these emotions. As Sri Aurobindo says in *The Life Divine :*

> 'For the universal soul all things and all contacts of things carry in them an essence of delight...*rasa,* which means at once sap or essence of a thing and its taste...We attain to something of this capacity for variable but universal delight in the aesthetic reception of things as represented by Art and Poetry, so that we enjoy there the *rasa* or taste of the sorrowful, the terrible, even the horrible or repellent (the *karuṇa*, *bhayānaka* and *bībhatsa* Rasas); and the reason is because we are detached, disinterested, not thinking of ourselves or of self-defence *(jugupsā)*, but only of the thing and its essence...
>
> ...the elimination of suffering must proceed by the substitution of *titiksā,* the facing, enduring and conquest of all shocks of existence for *jugupsā,* the shrinking and contraction: by this endurance and conquest we proceed to an equality'.[1]

In our confrontation of art and poetry, being freed from the normal reactions of everyday life, we learn at once to deploy

a detachment as regards the surface manifestations and a readiness to seize and face the essence of the experience.

But try as we might to explain away this paradox at the heart of great poetry, the paradox of pleasure in pain, delight in tragedy, we are unlikely to succeed in this attempt at the level of the reasoning intellect. The paradox—the tie of opposites—is perhaps the real truth of our normal life, and the existential problem is to face and master this clash of contraries and dualities, and get beyond them too. Valmiki makes Sita say, on listening to Hanuman's recital of Rama's sorrow and fidelity in love, that the words are nectar mixed with poison *(amritam vishasmsrishtam)*. The Rama story is poison and nectar at once, and like Sita herself, we too accept it and feel grateful. To accept the paradox is to be able to, transcend it and arrive at a blissful calm of mind, all passion spent. In some measure, the words addressed to Prometheus seem to offer a paradigm of the right attitude of *titiksā*, the willingness to dare, to master, to beyond all the dualities and paradoxes of life :

> *To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;*
> *To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;*
> *To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;*
> *To love, and bear; to hope, till Hope creates*
> *From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;*
> *Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;*
> *This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be*
> *Good, great and joyous, beautiiful and free;*
> *This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.*[2]

The experience of tragedy—of what great tragedy does to the reader or spectator—is not, perhaps, very different from this.

The theory of 'mimesis', as we proceed from Plato to Aristotle, undergoes a seachange; what is presumed to be a mere copy, twice removed from Reality, becomes—when Aristotle views it—the quintessence of life, an image of universal reality. Again, the Platonic criticism that poetry portrays the irrational and the violent, and could therefore have a deleterious effect on human morals, is sought to be answered by Aristotle in the katharsis clause. He didn't quite explain the nature of the deli-

ght and wholesomeness of Tragedy, but he set people thinking, and since poetic delight—*kāvyānanda*— *is* a fact of experience, different *rasikas* have theorised to their own satisfaction in accordance with their unique psychological reactions or experiences. In art, in poetry, we seem to start somewhere, and presently we feel transported to some other place. There is a story, there are characters, they speak in figures, they incarnate ideas and feelings and sentiments. It is all as in everyday life. Yet look a little farther, look a little deeper, we see new vistas, we see unplumbed profundities. The scales of *maya* seem to fall off, and the face of Reality seems to rise from the flames of dying phoenix. Did the Oedipus story—the Śakuntalā story—happen long ago? Was Śakuntalā no more than a girl too easily won and too soon rejected? But once the *rasika's* sensibility is engaged in a trance of imaginative attention, vistas are revealed to the inner eye, there are echoes in the corridors of time that lose themselves in eternity, there are sinuous creepers of significance, there are vast correspondences, and it is as though one has widened and deepened one's understanding.

As a key to the exploration of the inner continents of poetry, the *dhvani* theory could be most rewarding. Once again, there is the problem of translating the term into English. It is rather more than 'suggestion', or 'meaning',—but how much more? We may tentatively try equivalents like 'undertones', 'internal resonances', 'coils of significance'—but 'dhvani' by its very nature refuses to be cribbed, cabinned, contained within a verbal formula. *Rasa, dhvani* are alike elusive essences and accordingly resist our attempts to classify, categorise and package and label them. If there are only nine *rasas* corresponding to the appropriate *sthāyibhāvas (śringāra, karuṇa, vīra, bībhatsa hāsya, raudra, bhayānaka, adbhuta, śānta).* I have read somewhere that there are 9940 *dhvani*-varieties according to Abhinavagupta, and 10,455 according to Mammaṭa. Far better would it be to concentrate on the three basic varieties, linked respectively with *vastu* (matter, plot, form), *alankāra* (embellishment, fullness of detail, diction), and *rasa* (sensibility, intensity, quintessence). Not until the story or plot is seized in terms of

universality does it become truly poetic; not until verbal expression, whatever *alankāras* it may employ, becomes a new way, the one uniquely satisfying way in the context, of conveying adequately the poet's individual vision of the life and character, or not until verbal expression approaches the power of the primordial *sphoṭa*, not until then can it grow poetic wings conveying the enchantment of movement in its meaning; and, above all, not until the communicated *rasa* or sensibility is so laden with the undertones of significance as to kindle the soul to a new awareness of life's 'deeper magic' can such sentiment or sensibility give the *sahṛdaya* an authentic taste of Reality.

I should now bring these wayward wanderings between Western and Indian poetics to some sort of close. Mimesis and the *rasa* theory, katharsis and the *dhvanī* theory have their several mansions of significance and variations—often distracting—in aesthetic response and critical apperciation but these are inevitable, since there is no single law governing obscure processes of literary creation and literary enjoyment. While exploring the several significances, I have tried to insinuate distant filiations between the mimesis and the *rasa* theories on one hand, and the katharsis and the *dhvani* theories on the other. I am even prepared to admit, if driven to it, that what I have tried to do is more an exercise in loud thinking than any firm model-building, teaming Western and Indian concepts together so as to forge a universal aesthetics.

But there is one Western concept—that of the sublime—to which there seems to be no Indian parallel. In Aristotle's defence of poetry, there are no spiritual dimensions. Centuries later, a Greek rhetorician in Rome, Longinus (1st century A. D.), in his little treatise, *On the sublime*, explored these dimensions, though perhaps only tentatively. Longinus was widely read in Greek, Roman and Hebrew literature, and he came across instances of a style, force of articulation, that had on him the effect of lightning, a sudden illumination, a sense of being transported to overhead regions. For example, the climactic moments in the orations of Demonsthenes, some of the poems of Sappho, the opening of Genesis. This mode of utterance

Longinus called the 'sublime', the echo of a great mind, the reverberation of a great soul; thus, something more even than *rasa-dhavani*. Analysing the sources of sublimity, Longinus mentioned ideas, controlled passion, noble diction and figures, and a flaming unity or 'criticality' of organistion to produce on the hearer or reader the shock-like effect of sudden illumination and ecstasy. The other day I asked my friend K. Chandrasekharan—whether there is any concept in Sanskrit parallelling the Longinian 'sublime',. He immediately referred to a type of figure which Appayya Dikshita, after Jagannātha, has called *Uttamottama kāvya,* instancing the description in the fifth canto of *Kumāra Sambhavam* of the fall of rain-drops on Parvati's statuesque meditative trance, signifying the meeting and matching of the ascent of the five fires—*panchāgnis*—of aspriation from below and the descent of divine grace from above, It is such figures that effect the take-off to higher realm of poetic appreciation and spiritual illumination. Such poetry—*uttomattama kavyānubhava*—is verily akin to the outleap of a radiant unexpected light and an exhilaration and enjoyment that is more like spiritual realisation.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The life Divine* (International Centre of Education Edition, 1960), pp. 128-130.

2. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound,* ll. 570–78

K. Ayyappa Paniker

INDIAN POETICS AND WESTERN LITERARY CRITICISM : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Literary criticism in India is often traced back to the earliest known works in Sanskrit like the Vedas or the Itihasas, but a systematic exposition of the principles of poetics is said to begin with works like Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Literary criticism in the West similarly may be traced back to the earliest Homeric hymns, while a systematic presentation of its underlying tenets is to be seen in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Thus it may be said that in both places the period of its development covers more than two thousand years. A comparative study of these two traditions reveals three types of relationship: one, similarities and parallelisms; two; differences which turn out to be mutually complementary; and three, divergences that amount to irreconcilable contradictions. These may be taken up for a detailed investigation one by one.

Among the similarities and parallelisms may be listed the following:

(a) the relationship established between aesthetics and other forms of knowledge like metaphysics and ethics;
(b) the distinction drawn between poetics and rhetoric;
(c) the concept of the poet as seer *(Rishi)* and maker *(Prajāpati)*;
(d) the object of poetry or art as delight and moral instruction;
(e) the view that poetry is imitation *(anukṛti)*;
(f) the idea of aesthetic depersonalization *(sādhārnikaraṇa)*;
(g) the recognition of propriety *(aucitya)* as a basic principle;
(h) the classification of figurative language *(alankāra)*;
(i) the notion of genres.

In both Indian and Western systems, literary criticism is seen as an activity integrally related to the respective *weltanschauung* of the people concerned. Very often the concepts and terms

used in criticism are adapted from religion or ethics or metaphysics prevalent at the time. *Nāṭyaśāstra* holds that the dramatic art was invented by the creator of the world, that is, Brahma. Hiriyanna says: 'The *Dhvanyāloka* is not to be regarded as merely a treatise on empirical aesthetics as several others are; for it deveiops its views in close connection with philosophical theories, raising now and again questions like the logical status of verbal testimony and the psychological basis of *śānta-rasa.*' (*Art-Experience*, 1978, p. 71). It is also well-known that Abhinavagupta's commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra* is based on the Pratyabhijna school of philosophy. In the same way one cannot understand the full implications of Aristotle's writings without taking into account the various systems of Greek philosophy and the specific relationship between Socrates and Plato as well as Plato and Aristotle. Wimsatt and Brooks observe: 'Even if it were to happen that at this late date classical scholars changed their opinion about the authorship of the *Poetics*, one would still turn for the explication of these condensed and partly chaotic hints, to the system of Greek philosophy which most readily connects with them, the major works of Aristotle, especially his *Metaphysics*, *Ethics*, and *Politics*. The *Poetics* is a work of the type which Aristotelians have called 'acroamatic'—to be interpreted only with the help of other and larger works' *(Literary Criticism: A Short History*, 1970, p. 21). This interconnectedness is a basic point of similarity. In fact the very dialogue form used both in Indian and in Western works reveals the active involvement of the different, yet related, systems in both places.

Poetics is aesthetics in relation to poetry or literature in general, while rhetoric is a practical art concerned with the study of how words and sentences operate in a piece of writing or how to influence or persuade a reader or an audience to do something. Aristotle worte both *Poetics* and *Rhetoric;* and it is but natural, since the two are closely related. Poetics may be said to concern itself with the first principles, with high aesthetics, while rhetoric often deals with principles of a derivative kind, with low aesthetics. *Nāṭyaśāstra* too is basically concerned with the fundamentals of art, although it devotes some attention

to the details of the process of communication also. There is a long gap between Bharata and Daṇḍin, as very little is known about any immediate follow-up of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. By the time we come to Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha the transition from poetics to rhetoric seems to have already set in. The interest of the later critics seems to be shifted to secondary matters: there is elaborate classification and codification. The reader of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, like reader of Plato and Aristotle, is impressed with the freshness and originality of the concepts and terms encountered; the reader of Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha, like the reader of Horace and Longinus, becomes preoccupied with the belatedness of these writers. The elements of the neo-classicism of a later period are anticipated in their writings. What Wimsatt and Brooks say about Longinus will apply equally well to his Indian counterparts: 'A certain technical conventionalism marks the rhetorical analysis of Longinus, a limitation through dealing with inherited concepts. This can be seen too in other parts of the essay, for instance, under the heads of "great thoughts", the first source of elevation, where we come upon such an anomaly as "amplification" (or padding out an idea)' (*op. cit.*, 104).

The Greek word *poet* means *maker*, and goes well with the Sanskrit notion of a poet as *prajāpati*. The prophetic power associated with the poet in such expressions as 'Kavi krāntadarśi' and 'nānrishi kavi' is also conveyed by the Latin word for the poet, *vates*, meaning *seer* or *foreseer*. It is interesting to note, however, that this notion of the poet as semi-divine has not prevented the critics in either tradition from being rigorous and exacting in their examination of the works of poets. The critic as enlightened reader has not surrendered his responsibility.

Western classical critics have held that the function of poetry is to provide pleasure along with moral instruction. This idea is powerfully repeated by the Renaissance critics like Philip Sidney. Defending poetry against its detractors, Sidney writes like a devoted Renaissance classicist: 'Poesy therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *Mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth—to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture; with this end, to

teach and delight.' In later times in England there have been poet-critics who claimed that a poet was nothing, if not a teacher, and also that poets were 'unacknowledged legislators.' On the subject of the function of poetry, Indian aestheticians too have always been very eloquent. *Nāṭyaśāstra* says that drama or *nāṭya* which presents the gods, demons, kings and other people, enhances our knowledge; that *nāṭya*, which brings together whatever is, not elucidated by the Vedas, the Dharmaśāstras and ethics, will give entertainment:

Uttamādhamamadhyānām
Narāṇām karmasaṁśrayam,
Hitopadeśajananam
Nātyametat bhaviśyati.
Sarvārthe sarvadā caiva
Sarvakarmakriyāsvatha,
Sarvopadeśajanam
Nāṭyam loke bhaviśyati.
Duḥkhārttānām śramārttānām
Śokārttānām tapasvinām,
Viśrāntijananam kāle
Nāṭyametat bhaviśyati. 1

'Hitopadeśajananam' (instruction) and 'viśrāntijananam' (relief) along with 'Vinodajananam' (entertainment) seem to constitute the aim and function of art. Bhāmaha elucidates this as follows :

Dharmārthakāmamokṣeṣu
Vaicakṣaṇyam kalāsu ca,
Prītim karoti kīrtim ca
Sādhu kāvyanibandhanam. 2

The creation of good works of poetry helps man to achieve the *puruṣārthas*, the four-fold goal of human existence. Aristotle's famous definition of tragedy highlights the therapeutic function of that form of drama: 'Tragedy, then, is a representation of an action that is worth serious attention, complete in itself, and of some amplitude; in language enriched by a variety of artistic devices appropriate to the several parts of the

play; presented in the form of action, not narration; by means of pity and fear, bringing about the purgation of such emotions.' This function is apparently common to tragedy and epic. He says : 'If, therefore, tragedy is superior to epic in all these respects, and also in fulfilling its artistic function—for these forms of art ought to give, not just any kind of pleasure, but the kinds I have described—then obviously, in achieving its ends better than epic, it must be the better form of art.' The use of the term *mimesis* by Aristotle and the term *anukaraṇam* by Bharata has been elaborately commented on. Both words convey the idea of imitation, but attempts have been made by latter-day critics to make them mean something more or less than simple imitation. *Nāṭyaśāstra* says :

> *Nānā bhāvopasampannam*
> *Nānāvasthāntarātmakam,*
> *Lokavṛttānukaraṇam*
> *Nāṭyametan mayākṛtam.*

Lord Brahma, who made Natyaveda, declares that the dramatic art he has created is an imitation of the course of the world which consists of many emotions and several states of existence. Some of these ideas are repeated and reinforced in Chapter 26. Later critics like Dhananajaya have also endorsed this concept ('Avasthānukṛtirnāṭyam', meaning that drama is the imitation of the ways of the world). In not delimiting the scope of imitation Aristotle seems to be closer to Bharata than Plato, who insists that only objects which are beautiful in themselves should be imitated. Aristotle seems to find pleasure in the very process of correct imitation, irrespective of the nature of the objects imitated. Aristotle has identified human action, passion, and characters as particularly suitable for imitation in words. Critics like Wimsatt and Brooks have pointed out, however, that not only men or things as they are, but as better or worse than they are, even as ought to be or are thought to be, could be imitated. In the same way some Indian critics have interpreted the term 'anukaraṇam' to mean 'anusaraṇam' or 'anuvyavasāyam'.

Universalization or depersonalization is a concept dear to all classicists. Romantic aesthetics idolizes the personal self of the

writer or the character, and caters for the unique and inalienable features of the individual. Classical Sanskrit aestheticians use the term 'sadhāraṇikaraṇa', first used by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka as quoted in *Abhinavabhārati* by Abhinavagupta. This term has been variously explained by several distinguished scholars like Hiriyanna, Hanumantha Rao, and K. Krishnamoorthy. Commenting on the interpretations of the Aristotelian notion of catharsis, Wimsatt and Brooks observe: 'The exegetes of Aristotelian catharsis have chiefly devoted their efforts to arguing the question whether the term "catharsis" is a medical, Hippocratic metaphor implying the purgation or expulsion of something harmful, the emotions themselves—or is a religious or moral metaphor, implying the purification or aesthetic depersonalization of our usually selfish emotions of pity and fear' (*op. cit.*, p. 36). T. S. Eliot's rejection of the Wordsworthian idea of poetry as the expression of personality and his characterization of poety as the extinction of personlity or as an escape from personality are apparently influenced by Indian aesthetic theories.

The notion of decorum or propriety, the classification of figures of speech, and the categorization of different forms of poetry along with the identification of the virtues and blemishes of poetic compositions, are perhaps not so important as the more fundamental features discussed so far. Compared with the concept of *rasa*, for instance, these are non-substantial, but certainly not unimportant in the final evaluation of any given poetical work. Kṣemendra gave rise to a whole school of critical thinking based on the notion of *aucitya* or propriety. Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus also give due consideration to this notion. Horace finds a literary application for the Platonic concept of the ideal. As in India, it is the later critics who are drawn to detailed consideration of things like decorum, the use of tropes, and the establishment of norms for the different species or kinds of poetry. With every new critic the number of figures of speech increases both in the West and in India. There are more of them in Horace than in Aristotle and more in Longinus than in Horace. By the time the medieval and renaissance scholars entered the field, the number had greatly increased. A parallel development may be

found in Indian aesthetics too. Kāvyaśāstra changed into Alaṁkāraśāstra in the course of a few centuries. Outside of Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and Mammaṭa, the main concern often happens to be the nature and the exclusive qualities of minor genres and sub-genres of poetry.

Among the many differences between the Indian and Western traditions of literary criticism, especially before Western influence came to be felt, some are of a mutually complementary nature. These differences have possibly resulted from the fact that each system specialized in certain aesthetic values, not shared by the other in any appreciable measure. Sometimes the differences may have arisen from the idiosyncrasy of individual scholars. Examples of the former are, to mention only the most important ones, the concepts of *rasa*, *bhāva*, and *dhvani*. A possible example of the idiosyncratic kind is the concept of *vakrokti*, raised to the level of a basic principle by Kuntaka. In Western criticism, on the other hand, they have developed certain concepts which have not gained any special place in Indian aesthetics. Examples of these are the historical approach and the sociological approach, often decried by the formalists in the West too. Argument advanced here is that while these differences are natural, there is no reason why one system should not learn from the other. Comparative aesthetics should make it possible for a modern scholar in the West to benefit from an understanding of the principles of *rasa* and *dhvani*, just as some of the scholars in India in recent times have found an application for the historical and sociological perspectives to the study of Indian literature. While slavish imitation of everything foreign is bad, selective adaptation of whatever is substantial in itself and useful for the Indian context need not be discouraged. Idiosyncratic concepts like *Parnassien* formalism in Europe and *Varkokti* in India, like several other minor movements and 'isms' that have come up from time to time in both places, may not have any great relevance; perhaps whatever is of value in them may have already been assimilated into the greater schools of thought.

We finally come to those differences which are mutually contradictory or irreconcilable (Perhaps at some higher level of

perception even these can be reconciled). They seem to arise from basic differences in the world-views which have developed in the two places over long years. The West appears to be too heavily committed to empiricism or *pratyakṣajnānam*, and this has probably led to the growth of literary forms which are not open-ended. In India the prevalence of open-ended literary structures like the Purāṇas is based on the fact that the source of knowledge here was largely taken to be *anumāna* and intuition. The growth of realism in the West can thus be explained on the basis of the belief that what is perceived by the senses is the real. The theory of literature as 'reflection of life' also arose from this belief. The basically humanist approach to truth, viewing man as an end in himself, as the ultimate value, has led to a notion of time as clock-measured. Each individual is a self-contained entity; hence death is a finality. This notion lies at the back of Western tragedy. In Indian drama, there is neither comedy nor tragedy in the Western sense, because death is seen only as a passage to another form of existence. *Swargārohaṇa* or *mokṣa* is what happens even to the demons that get killed. This perception of time as an endless continuum is related to the view that good and evil are both essential to the cyclical process of life; they are more or less like oxygen and carbon dioxide. One comes from the other, and goes back into it, in a series of non-stop transformations. When every birth is thought of as an incarnation, there is no terror in death, except as temporarily simulated by the actor on the stage in an intermediate scene, only to underscore its essential transitoriness.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. 'This *nāṭya* will relate to actions of men—good, bad, and indifferent, and impart beneficial counsel to them all.
   The *nāṭya* will be instructive to all in all matters and at all times, through actions and activities depicted in it.
   This *nāṭya* will offer timely relief to ascetics and all those who are afflicted with grief, sorrow, or (over-) exertion.'
2. 'Composition of good poetry produces ability in (the pursuit of) *Dharma, Artha. Kāma* and *Mokṣa* as well as in Arts. It also confers Pleasure and Fame.'

V. N. Dhavale

INDIAN POETICS AND MODERN HERMENEUTICS

Innumerable problems connected with language—words, sentences, propositions, the relation between words and things, the figurative use of language, etc.—have always exercised the minds of philosophers and other thinkers for several centuries. In the West, at least from the days of the Sophists and Socrates and Plato. In India, linguistic speculations began even earlier. But with the progress of new sciences or systems of thought, the problems have become far more complicated and controversial than they used to be. This is truer of the central problem of Meaning and Interpretation than of other linguistic problems such as grammar, syntax, phonetics, and so on. The latter cannot be assumed to be as 'universal' as the problem of meaning. Syntax, for example, is in various subtle ways peculiar to a language, though it may also illustrate some universal concepts. In the present century language and linguistics have provided the basis for philosophical speculation all over the world. Particularly after Russell, Wittgenstein, the Vienna Circle, Austin and Chomsky, no great thinker can ignore language in any discussion. For some, the philosophy of linguistics is now going to be the central concern of philosophy.[1] More recently, with the Structuralists, the Post-structuralists and the Deconstructionists (R. Barthes, Derrida, the Yale School, and others) language has become even more significant than 'things'.

This contemporary background, however, should not make us forget that ancient and medieval Indian writers on logic and philosophy, and even rhetoric and poetics, were equally assiduously engaged in the study of language in all its aspects. Great grammarians like Pāṇini, grammarian-philosophers like Patanjali and Bhartṛhari, linguistic philosophers like Kumārila, Prabhākara and other Mimāṁsakas, and literary theorists like Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Mammaṭa, and others examined the nature

of language and the light it can throw on various metaphysical and critical concepts. The metaphysical conclusions are, of course, intimately connected with the school of thought to which each writer belonged, but the intelligent sidelights on the firm hold that language has on Reality can be of great interest even to modern thinkers. That all our knowledge is determined by, is intermixed with, and bounded by language is a very well-known observation by Bhartṛhari in his *Vākyapadīya*.[2] It is true that sometimes linguistic speculation is determined solely by the philosopher's study of his own language. Indian writers naturally depended mainly on Sanskrit as Greek writers relied on Greek. This was an inevitable handicap. At least a part of all linguistic theory, even today, seems to rely mainly on the characteristics of a particular language or of a group of languages.

Meaning and Interpretation are obviously important in all uses of language. But on many oecasions only the literal sense is adequate for communication. Sometimes, as in the sciences, ordinary language is subordinate to the concepts determined by various symbols and technical terms. But in the study of literature meaning becomes far more elusive and is only partly dependent on mere lexical or grammatical-syntactical details. Literature in any language is created as much by very subtle and complicated aspects of language as by social conventions. In literature, as everybody knows, more is meant than meets the ear. Literature relies mostly on what is *not* said rather than on what appears to be said This aspect of 'literary' language cannot easily be codified and reduced to fool-proof rules. Moreover, each language presents some peculiar problems which may not be shared by other languages. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis [3] about linguistic relativity (first directly stated by the German thinker Humboldt in the nineteenth century), whatever philosophical objections may be raised against its total adoption[4], appears to be supported by the innumerable subtle and often quite obvious differences between one literature and another. For, after all, literature is a social product; and as societies differ, literatures also must and do differ. Some semantic theories, from the mathematical theories at one end to the purely emotive at the

other, can explain only a fraction of what matters in literature. Obviously, truth-conditional theories of meaning are not appropriate in the discussion of fiction. No semantic theory, if it is to be useful in the investigation of 'literary' meaning, can afford to be one-sided or concerned exclusively with only one aspect of meaning—verbal, syntactic, lexical or emotive. What is needed is socio-linguistics and psycho-linguistics. The emphasis must be on pragmatics if the universal popularity of literature or fiction is to be discussed. Many semanticists, engaged in the task of explaining 'literal' meaning, naturally ignore the context while dealing with a specific word or sentence. But literature is altogether dependent on the context, Whether any piece of writing is to be regarded as 'literature' at all is determined by the context—various factors such as the nature of the 'discourse', the genre, the intention of the author, the social and historical presuppositions, the 'tone' of the writer, etc. Some semantic theories, of course, for good theoretical reasons, exclude some of these factors. That is why not many linguisticians or philosophers directly help the literary critic. Even Dr. I. A. Richards, who is primarily concerned with the meaning and interpretation of literary discourses, has occasionally taken a lop-sided view of meaning—as, for example, in his earlier emphasis on emotive meaning, or his later theory of pluri-signification, liberty of interpretation, etc., which seems to justify the views of critics like Empson and Cleanth Brooks and philosophers like Barthes and Derrida.

Against this background the views of modern hermeneuticians, though intended primarily for the interpretation of the social sciences, appear to be helpful to the literary critic. Modern hermeneutics, especially in Germany, in the hands of Dilthey, Gadamer and others restores the social aspect of meaning. Though the Marxists insist on 'history' and society they tend to ignore the individual. But Gadamer and his followers, and even those who criticise him for one reason or another (for example, E. D. Hirsch, Jr.[5]), have emphasized the social dimension of meaning which must naturally include the writer as well as the reader.

Indian writers on rhetoric and poetics considered the problem of interpretation as a many-sided problem and foresaw several possible obstacles that the reader must overcome. The well-known theory of Suggestion *(Dhvani)*, the distinction between the literal, matter-of-fact use of language and the literary, figurative use of language, became almost the *sine qua non* for poetry since the days of Ānandavardhana (9th century). And the three 'powers' of words—*Abhidhā* (denotation), *Lakṣaṇā* (the secondary signification of a word, 'indication', made necessary by the inadequacy of the denoted sense in a particular context), and *Vyanjanā* (Suggestion), have been a commonplace idea in Indian criticism for several centuries. Indian critics and philosophers also postulated other types or kinds of meaning, for they discovered that the meaning of a sentence is something over and above the meaning of each individual word and the total meaning of a passage differs from the meaning of individual sentences. *Tātparya*, for example, which raised many controversies, was for some the meaning of a 'sentence', for others, propositional intention or purport. The sentence is a Gestalt and not a series of bits and pieces. We must, of course, distinguish between meaning and 'interpretation'; the latter gives us the 'real' significance of any long paragraph or poem. A sentence can sometimes mean even the exact opposite of what the words seem to say—as, for example, in Irony. The meaning here depends on the entire situation which must include the speaker, the listener, the surroundings, the speaker's relation with the hearer, the speaker's intention, etc. The significance of irony, paradox, ambiguity, etc., particularly in poetry and fiction, was recognized by different schools of criticism in ancient and medieval India. Several words such as *Dhvani*, *Vyañjanā*, *Samāsokti*, *Vakrokti*, etc., and the never-ending division and classification of figures of speech show the importance the Indian scholars attached to an exhaustive and often pedantic analysis of 'words and meaning'. Indeed the indefatigable zest with which these writers classify and enumerate antagonizes some modern readers of Sanskrit critical theory.

Hermeneutics has always tried to establish the validity of interpretation. This validity must rest on some obvious consi-

derations. The first will naturally be: is the author (or speaker) to be given any say in the matter ? Are we free to accept 'the death of the author' proclaimed indirectly by T.S. Eliot in his early essays and directly by Barthes and his followers today, and proceed to interpret any line or passage on the basis of the reader's (or hearer's) own intelligence and ingenuity? Hermeneuticians not merely recognize the social context of all linguistic use, but also concede that the author and the reader are both relevant in the process of interpretation. Though there can be many readers the writer will usually be only one. So he can, if we allow him, control the validity of our interpretation. Naturally the intention of the author, whether clearly stated or merely implied, or constructed by the reader on the basis of historical evidence, etc., can always help. Many hermeneutical philosophers recognize the 'intentional' nature of thought, and a theory of meaning must take note of 'intention', at least for empirical reasons. That the context is by far the most important factor in all interpretation is an obvious truth. In speech, the context is visible and the gesticulations of the speaker, his facial expression and so on, convey meaning with ease and emphasis. One wonders, therefore, whether language is really an efficient means of communication in social life; for we invariably notice that everyone relies on non-linguistic signs also—the movements of the hands, eyes, neck, etc. On the stage we always expect action, not mere speech, which in a way supports the view that language by itself is a poor conveyer of meaning. When we read literature the author (speaker) is absent. We can, however, generally collect evidence to throw some light on the author's intention—his own meaning. This is what modern hermeneutical philosophers recommend and what ancient Indian rhetoricians insisted upon. In interpreting any text, the context is the real key.

Of the three types of meaning mentioned earlier the most valuable for the creation and enjoyment of literature is suggestion *(Vyañjanā)*, dependent exclusively on the entire context. But the word 'context' is far too comprehensive—it can include anything from historical and linguistic details to the temperamental reactions of a listener or reader. The most remarkable thing about Indian

poetics is that the leading thinkers anticipated many obvious and many hidden difficulties in the way of interpretation and tried to help the reader by laying down some specific rules. Some of these seem to have great significance for 'literary' semantics even today. In many famous verses *(Kārikās)* several details have been provided by Bhartṛhari[6], and following him, by many noted writers such as Mammaṭa and others, which give us a workable idea of what a context should include. Even in comprehending the denoted sense, rules are necessary if the language is capable of frequently handling double or multiple meaning. Thus in Sanskrit, *Sandhi*, *Samāsa* (compounds), ingenious periphrasis, innumerable synonyms, etc., can make even the normal or denoted sense of a word or sentence doubtful and ambiguous. In such cases some of the details in the context that the reader or hearer must first note are enumerated in the following passage :

> Conjunction, disjunction, association, antagonism, motive *(arthaḥ)*, context, special attribute *(Lingam)*, proximity of another word, power, propriety *(auciti)*, place, time, gender, accent and others are the causes of the recollection, *i.e.*, apprehension of a particular meaning, when there is no determination regarding the meaning of a word.[7]

Similarly, in the case of the third kind of meaning (suggestion), we are told:

> That operation of the (three-fold) sense, which owing to the speciality of the speaker, the person addressed, the modulation of voice or intonation *(kākuḥ)*, the sentence, the expressed sense, the proximity of another, the occasion *(prastāva)*, the place, the time and the like, becomes the cause of the apprehension of another sense (in the case) of persons possessing poetic genius, is Suggestion *(vyaktiḥ)* itself.[8]

The above passages try to specify how meaning, whether primary or secondary, can be grasped by the hearer or reader. Some of these details are, of course, intimately conected with the nature of the Sanskrit language and are not easily applicable

to other languages. For example, gender and 'accent' are very important in Sanskrit as gender is frequently arbitrary and 'accent' in this context refers specifically to the Vedas. But many of the details mentioned above do influence our understanding in all situations.

We may say, therefore, that many factors which are exercising the minds of modern hermeneutic philosophers are included in the views of Indian literary critics—the author and the reader, the place and time, the tone and intention, etc. Meaning is not left exclusively to the words on the page as some New Critics, semanticists and philosophers do; nor is there a strict insistence on complete objectivity. The hermeneuticians are primarily concerned with the social sciences—especially history and sociology. But even in the interpretation of history or of social mores and institutions the importance that must be given to 'place', time', the individual and his probable intention, etc., cannot be ignored. The interpreter must try to place himself in the writer's 'situation', and must not forget the human and linguistic limitations in all acts of communication. The uncompromising insistence on complete objectivity in all interpretation which characterized the first quarter of this century has now been relaxed by historians, sociologists, philosophers and even by some linguisticians. The Chomskyan 'revolution' has brought about the necessary change.

I do not wish to suggest that some ancient Indian writers were able to place the theory of interpretation on a fool-proof scientific basis. As Hirsch has rightly observed:

> It may be set down as a general rule of interpretation that there are no interpretive rules which are at once general and practical.[9]

But working with only one language, these ancient thinkers certainly visualised the common pitfalls in normal human communication and laid down a few specific conditions for judging whether a meaning is right or wrong. It is very significant that they included grammatical details, social surroundings, linguistic nuances, the intentional aspect, etc., in their discussion. And, after all, how do we distinguish between a correct interpretation

and a 'wrong' interpretation if we exclude all personal and social factors and rely on the 'words' alone?10

On the whole, Indian writers on poetics were more empirical in their approach to meaning though they were also aware of the metaphysical theories of the grammarians, the idealists, the realists, etc. The theoretical controversies were mostly left to the philosophers and the practical aspect of 'literary' interpretation was taken up by the rhetoricians. The 'pragmatics' of language was far more important than metaphysical speculation which could turn even 'WORD' into a mystery and create the theory of *Śabdabrahma*. Bhartṛhari himself, in many ways the most advanced thinker about linguistic problems, made a significant contribution to the theory of verbal Monism *(Śabdādvaita* or *Śabdabrahmavāda)*. The controversies in which grammarians and phiosophers of different schools took part are quite well-known. In fact, the theories about word-meaning, verb-meaning, sentence-meaning, etc., with various points of view represented by Paṇini, Patanjali, Kumārila, Prabhākara and others and their interpreters like Nāgesh are no doubt basic discussions in theoretical linguistics. But their connection with literature is in a sense indirect since all such theories primarily deal with the general use of language. Writers on poetics naturally concentrate on the *poetic* use of language. The well-known writer Mammaṭa, for example, mentions the two rival schools of Mīmāṁsā *(Anvitābhidhānavāda* and *Abhitānvayavāda)*, but refrains from discussing them in detail and turns to the practical aspects of the three kinds of meaning. According to some scholars, writers on on *Alaṁkāra* were not always faithful to the philosophers in presenting their views.11 But, after all, 'suggestion' *(Dhvani)* was the most important kind of meaning for the discussion of poetry. So they tried to explain how suggestion is inevitable and also recognizable. The attempt to explain how irony, ambiguity, paradox, etc., are to be perceived is the most creditable aspect of this theory of 'literary' meaning. How we *can* perceive irony, etc., is a problem even now—if we decide to ignore the social context, the entire background for any utterance. According to Dr. S. K. De, the great Sanskrit scholar.

> The metaphorical or the allegoric, however veiled it may be, is still in a sense expressed and must be taken as such; but the suggestive (*Vyaṅgya*) is always unexpressed, and is therefore a source of greater charm through its capacity of concealment; for this concealment, in which consists the essence of art, is in reality no concealment at all.[12]

This concealed meaning, however, can be made known to the reader only by the setting, by circumstantial evidence, and not merely by the words on the page. Irony, or intentional and unintenional ambiguity, can be understood only when the entire situation presupposed in any use of language is fully known. It seems, therefore, that what is frequently referred to by ancient rhetoricians as the 'power' of words *(śabdaśakti)* is, at least in the case of suggestion *(Vyañjanā)*, the power of the entire context. The same words in different contexts can and do mean different things, and lead to quite different results. It is also doubtful whether the suggested meaning will always be the same for all readers. In practice, we see how a well-known poem or novel is interpreted differently by different 'competent' readers. The suggested sense, therefore, also remains to some extent subjective. The details provided by the context no doubt help to reduce the subjective element. The interpretation, however, depends as much on the reader as on the writer. The reader of literature must be a man of taste, a connoisseur, a *Rasika*, a *Saṃhdaya*, etc. How can all readers comprehend the same meaning if a good deal depends on the intelligence and the knowledege of the reader? Whether the intention of the writer and the mental framework of the reader can be regarded as essential factors in all interpretation has recently been a controversial issue, especially when it is argued that a literary text is 'public' and no reference to the author's own view or the reader's psychology is relevant.[13] But theory and practice cannot always go together. In practice, it is the competent readers who mostly disagree. And the factors which can lead to disagreement must therefore be considered in semantic theory, and this is what Indian literary critics tried to do.

As we have seen earlier, in conversation non-linguistic factors

also influence our comprehension. Similarly, in the interpretation of ancient or modern literary texts the words on the page cannot stand by themselves, but the whole text—whether poem, novel or play—is one unit of speech. A text must have a context not always stated by the text itself. Historical facts, biographical facts, contemporary allusions and criticism can certainly help the interpretation. Modern hermeneutic philosophers recognize the relevance of the writer's background as also of the reader's own surroundings, his 'situation'. It is here that hermeneutical theories and Indian 'poetic' theories seem to agree. Language, after all, is a 'loaded weapon' and its use or misuse is easily seen in all political and social controversies, in all 'Letters to the Editor' and even in harmless discussions. It is this quality of language, no doubt, that 'creates' literature. But instead of hoping to make all language rigid and concrete like 'things', why should we not accept a *via media* for the interpretation of literary language ?

In hermeneutic philosophy an empirical perspective has been suggested for the interpretation of social disciplines. The difficult arguments of Dilthey, Gadamer and others and their relevance for the interpretation of literature and other Arts has been discussed by many English writers. Dr Janet Wolff remarks:

> Gadamer approaches hermeneutic theory through aesthetics because, in his view, the experience of art is ideally suited to demonstrate the limits of the scientific consciousness in the cultural sciences.[14]

Further, Dr. Wolff points out :

> By referring constantly to the meanings of the artist, his work and his society, the sociology of art cannot fail to take account of the nature of art itself, and the aesthetics of art; the work of art; the relationship of these artistic meanings to the world of the artist and his audience will also be an intrinsic part of the analysis.[15]

I have referred to hermeneutic philosophy in particular because these philosophers bear in mind the social and historical aspects of language, and are not concerned merely with meaning

but also with *interpretation.* It is true that hermeneutics is mainly interested in social sciences—in the interpretation of cultures and social institutions. Literature also is a social product and, in a sense, social history. Earlier hermeneuticians were engaged in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures; modern philosophers have turned to secular disciplines. The cumulative effect of the past and the present on any interpretation, however, cannot be forgotten–

> Like Dilthey and other earlier writers on hermeneutics, Gadamer argues that the meanings of the past, of a text, or of a tradition must be grasped in their own terms and in their own historical context. Understanding is always and necessarily from the point of view of person doing the understanding.[16]

The relevance of this approach for the understanding of literature is quite obvious. The extension of the approach to literary texts has been suggested by some hermeneuticians though they have not discussed the matter in detail. Commenting on Gadamer's point of view and with special reference to literature, Dr. Wolff remarks :

> To refer specifically to the understanding of literature, this means that we cannot talk of any single 'true' interpretation of a text. The interpretation will change with the situation, society and period of the interpreter. It is always a form of re-interpretation.[17]

This need not, however, lead necessarily to what Hirsch has called hermeneutical skepticism. For though the interpretation and its significance may differ for each generation or group, its meaning will remain comparatively stable because of the words and the syntax. There will be checks and counter-checks which the hermeneuticians also recognize.

A careful reading of the old Indian texts and the learned commentaries giving a critical exposition of almost every word and sentence used by the old masters will convince a modern reader that several basic problems connected with meaning and interpretation were visualized by many Indian thinkers. The

controversies which led to sharp and sometimes hot exchanges not only prove the logical acumen of the writers but also their academic interest is linguistic theory. From the earliest times Indian grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers questioned all assumptions about language—particularly the status of individual words, sentences, primary meaning, etc. Some of them were quite revolutionary and very rational in their views. For example, Bhāmaha, the first systematic writer on poetics (for Bharata was mainly concerned with Drama), long ago pointed out that meanings of words depend merely on social convention and not on any occult power.[18] The most significant aspect of these discussions is the great love of literature—poetry and drama—that they invariably reveal. This genuine love enabled all the leading theorists and their commentators to steer clear of abstruse metaphysical controversies and to concentrate on the nature of language in literary works. Thus the greatest 'literary' critic, Abhinavagupta, clearly shows how the response to great poetry must depend on the sensibility of the reader himself, and naturally the interpretation of literature is not an easy task that any casual reader can perform. But how one can proceed with the help of linguistic theories like *dhvani* or *vakrokti* has been ably demonstrated by several rhetoricians with a number of apt illustrations. In fact the ability to illustrate every single detail with a relevant passage or passages makes the writings of Sanskrit scholars far more practical than abstract discussions about passages without context.

The need for establishing a hierarchy of meanings—primary, secondary, tertiary, etc.—was seen very early by writers on Alaṁkāraśāstra, and this insight provided the various schools with enough material for theoretical arguments. That many details in these theories were challenged by renowned Indian rhetoricians also goes to prove that these writers were thorough in their examination of every point of view. In fact the very thought-provoking criticisms of the *rasa* theory of Bharata and also of some aspects of the *dhvani* theory of Ānandavardhana are very valuable checks on both. Though the recognition of *dhvani* is inevitable in the discussion of literary discourse we

cannot really prove that it is merely a 'power' of words. Critics like Mukulabhaṭṭa and Mahimabhaṭṭa, for example, had different views about the way in which *dhvani* should be explained. Mahimabhaṭṭa, in particular, in his *Vyaktiviveka* has some very shrewd comments on the nature of *vyanjanā* and his view that *dhvani* can be properly included in the scope of *anumāna* (Inference) deserves careful consideration. These critics in fact draw our attention to the simple fact that *lakṣaṇā* and *vyanjanā*, especially the latter, are not a matter of convention like *abhidhā*, but really depend on what we may call 'circumstantial necessity' created by the failure of the literal sense *(Mukhyārtha)*. Thus suggestion *(Vyanjanā)* can be regarded as a power of the situation, of the social context. Perhaps the greatest achievement of ancient Indian writers on poetics is that they recognized from the beginning the difference between the use of language in literature and its other uses. Aristotle regarded the effective use of metaphor as a mark of genius. This significance of figurative language was not only recognized by Indian writers, but they also tried to establish how the situation creates the need for metaphor. This emphasis on the social aspect of language brings them closer to the hermeneutic and the socio-linguistic philosophers. The various details enumerated in the famous *kārikās* quoted earlier clearly show that the critics took note not only of social surroundings (even the presence of another person who can hear or overhear) but also of the psychology of the speaker and listener. In this connection it is interesting to note that Gadamer 'who is interested in understanding as such... regards conversation as a paradigm model for analysing the process of understanding.'[19] He and his followers clearly accept the presence of prejudices in our response to the written word— sometimes personal prejudices, but more often social prejudices that we share with our group, our clan, our country. Place and time determine the nature of our prejudices. But they are important in our understanding. As Dr. Wolff sums up, '...what Gadamer proceeds to argue is that prejudices (at least, *legitimate* prejudices...) are necessary conditions for understanding.'[20] Meaning is, therefore, never purely impersonal or merely linguistic;

nor is it purely subjective, depending on the reader alone, leading to as many interpretations as there are readers. It is, as some philosophers assert, an 'affair of consciousness.'[21] All interpretation is inter-personal or inter-subjective, and is determined solely by the context. Without elaborate arguments Indian critics of poetry arrived at this important truth on the basis of common experience.

Modern linguisticians who are engaged in the discussion of Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, or sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics, have no doubt made many valuable contributions to linguistic theory which certainly help a student of literature. But the insight of ancient writers also must be appreciated. They could think of dealing with linguistic meaning from the 'productive' as well as the 'receptive' side: that is, from the point of view of the speaker or writer who naturally has a wide range of words to select from, and the reader who must carefully note the entire context, including the personality of the speaker, and finally depend on his own sensibility for the interpretation of literary discourse. If even in the interpretation of history and sociology, which stand midway between pure science and fiction in respect of true 'objectivity', the hermeneutic philosophers are ready to accommodate both the writer and reader, why should fictional discourse alone suffer from 'Intentional Fallacy', 'Affective Fallacy', etc.?[22] We must remind ourselves that though literature is a social product in one sense, it is also the creation of individuals.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See *Philosophy of linguistics*, ed. Jerrold J. Katz (O.U.P., 1985), p. 1.
2. *Vākyapadīya*, I. 123 :

   Na so'sti prataya loke yaḥ śabdānugamādṛte,
   Anuviddhamiva jnānaṁ sarvaṁ śabdena bhāsate.
3. See B.L. Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*, ed. J.B. Carroll (Cambridge, Mass. : The M.I.T. Press, 1956).
4. See, for example, Max Black, *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca & London : Cornell University Press, 1962)
5. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven &

London : Yale U.P., 1967), Third Printing, 1971. See particularly the appendix, 'Gadamer's Theory of Interpretation'.

6. See Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*.
7. *The Kāvyaprakāśa* of Mammaṭa, ed. A.B. Gajendragadkar (Bombay : Popular Book Depot), Second Revised Edition, 1959. P. 24 :

   Saṁyogo viprayogaśca sāhacaryaṁ virodhitā,
   Arthaḥ prakaraṇaṁ lingaṁ śabdasyānyasya saṁnidhiḥ;
   Sāmarthyamaucitī deśaḥ kālo vyaktiḥ svarādayaḥ,
   Śabdārthasyānavacchede viśeṣa smṛtihetavaḥ.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 28 :

   Vaktṛboddhavyakākunaṁ vākyavācyānyasaṁnidheḥ,
   Prastāvadeśakālādervaiśiṣṭyāt pratibhājuṣam;
   Yo'rthasyānyārthadhīheturvyāpāro vyaktireva sā.

9. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *op. cit.*, p. 202.
10. See, for example, I.A. Richards, *So Much Nearer* (New York : Harcourt, Brace and world, Inc., 1968). See particularly Chap. VII—'Variant Readings and Misreading'.
11. See Gaurinath Sastri, *The Philosophy of word and Meaning* (Calcutta : Sanskrit College, 1959), pp. 220-22. See also M. M. sharma, *The Dhvani Theory in Sanskrit Poetics* (Varanasi : Chowkhamba, 1968.)
12. S.K. De, *Some Problems of Sanskrit Poetics* (Calcutta, 1959), p. 203.
13. According to Hirsch, Jr. (*op. cit.*, p. 126), 'All valid interpretation of every sort is founded on the recognition of what an author meant.' For some recent views on this subject with special reference to literature, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class ?* (Cambridge, Mass. and London : Harvard U. P., 1980); Charles Altieri, *Act and Quality* (Amherst : The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981); and laurence Lerner, *Reconstructing Literature* (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1983).
14. Jenet Wolff, *Hermeneutic Philosophy and the Sociology of Art* (London and Boston : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 109.
15. J. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
16. J. Routh and J. Wolff (eds.), *The Sociology of Literature* (Keele : University of Keele, 1977), p. 20.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
18. Refer to Bhamaha's well-known statement : '*mandāḥ saṅketikānarthan manyante pāramārthikan.*' See also P.K. Mazumdar, *Philosophy of Language* (Calcutta : Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1977).

19. C.B. Cox and A.E. Dyson (eds.) *The Twentieth Century Mind*, III, 1945-1965 (O.U.P., 1972). Oxford Paperback, p. 113.
20. J. Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 105
21. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *op. cit.*. p. 23.
22. See particularly Wimsatt's restatement of his point of view in W. K. Wimsatt, *Day of the Leopards* (New Haven & London : Yale U.P., 1976). See also *On Literary Intention*, ed. D. Newton de Molina (Edinburgh : At the University Press, 1976).

P. S. Sastri

INDIAN POETICS AND NEW CRITICISM : A STUDY IN ATTITUDES

The New Critics considered here are Ransom, Tate, R.P. Warren, and the early Brooks. They sought an analytic account of the language of a work of art, as modern neo-classicists. This study gave rise to a study of metaphor and imagery, and of myth. The 'myth and metaphor' branch reduced great and complex works of art at times to the level of a primitive myth, or folk tale. This New Criticism, however, is not a unified house. There is a bewildering variety of critical theories and practices. As Blackmur has argued, the most creative aspect of American literature in this century *is* its criticism.

The New Criticism set out to answer some basic questions. These are : How is the poetic language distinguished from other ways of using language ? What is it that makes a poem unique ? These questions led to the formalist's obsession with the technique. This textual analysis convinced them that the *I* must be banished from the centre of all poetry.

In his *Science and Poetry* (1926) Richards argued that poetry deals with 'pseudo-statements'. The words in a poem have only an 'emotive meaning', not a 'referential meaning'. Brooks and warren in their *Understanding Poetry* held that 'poetry is a form of speech, or discourse, written or spoken'; and that it differs from scientific discourse by being a communication of 'attitudes, feelings, and interpretations'. The rise of modern criticism, says Cleanth Brooks *(Critiques and Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stallman), 'is part of a general intensification of the study of language and symbolism...It is no accident, therefore, that a great deal of modern criticism has occupied itself with the problem of how language actually works and specifically how it works in a piece of literature.' The nature of poetry is determined by the nature of the language used.

Ransom opposed science to art. The 'free and unpredictable associations (of art)...are impertinences to the scientific temper, but delightful to the soul that in the routine of scientific chores is oppressed with the sense of serving a godless and miserly master.' In an essay entitled 'Thoughts on the Poetic Discontent', he spoke of science as man's effort to dominate his environment. The ironic mode in poetry expresses the failure of his endeavour (*The Fugitive*, June 1925).

Pure science is 'concerned only with knowing something', while 'art is concerned with making something as well as knowing something'. In seeking only to know, science loses sight of the 'body' of the world. The artist breaks away from these abstractions, and therefore restores the 'body' to us. The scientist deals with abstractions because he can take up only one object or value at a time. The world of art 'offers fullness of content, to give us the sense of actual values'. Art alone offers what is called 'a qualitative density or value density'. poetry is a discourse different from that of prose. The differentia is said to be 'an ontological one'. Poetry 'treats an order of existence a grade of objectivity which cannot be treated in scientific discourse' (*New Criticism*. 206, 279-81, 293). We seem to be getting back to the heresy of a poetic subject.

Wellek in *Theory of Literature* distinguishes between the aesthetically indifferent words and the aesthetically effective ones. The former are called 'materials', and the manner in which they become aesthetically efficacious is called 'structure'. Structure includes 'both form and content so far as they are organised for aesthetic purposes'. Then the work of art is treated as 'a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose'. 'The real poem must be conceived as a structure of norms', which are found in the sound-structure, in the syntactic structure, and in the objects represented. Then poetry has its differentia only in a certain kind of language. The work of art is not real (like a statue), nor mental (like the experience of light or pain), nor ideal (like a triangle). It is a system of norms or ideal concepts which are inter-subjective. They must be assumed to exist in collective ideology, changing with it, accessible only

through individual mental experiences based on the sound-structure of its sentences. It is even said that 'there is no structure outside norms and values' (141, 157). This is one kind of mysticism.

II

The Indian attitude to the problem thus raised by these New Critics is revealed in the concept of *Sāhitya,* literature. Bhāmaha (5th century), in his *Kavyālaṁkāra* (1.16), defined a poem as the union of sound-word and meaning. This togetherness *(sahita)* gave rise to the word *sāhitya.* By sound-word and meaning Kuntaka (10th century) meant significator (*vācaka*) and the signified (*Vācya*). The pleasure a poem evokes is in the two becoming one. In the 17th century Jagannātha defined a poem as that sound-word which expresses or suggests an aesthetically satisfying meaning. When the two come together there arises a specific quality. Kuntaka said that the relation between the word and its meaning in a good poem is one of inherence. They compete with each other in suggesting or revealing beauty; and they mutually support and beautify one another like friends. The distinct feature of this unity is one where the sound and the meaning, the sound of one word and another, and the meaning of one word and another compete with each other in order to secure or realize a beauty jointly; and this beauty is apprehended by the mind and heart jointly as *rasa.* A similar competition is to be found in the elements of construction, style, figure, and embellishments. Emphasizing the uniqueness of word-meaning unity, Udbhaṭa (8th century) maintained that the differentia of a good poem is to be found in the equal importance of the components. This idea appears in Rājaśekhara who observed that a poem is a special kind of linguistic expression. Mahimabhaṭṭa held that in a poem both word and meaning are together important since the two are equally well enlivened by *rasa.*

A better distinction between the poetic and non-poetic forms of expression was formulated by Bhāṭṭanayaka (10th century). He distinguished poetry from Śāstra (scriptural texts) and from *ākhyāna* (history and mythological narratives). In the Vedic texts the most important element is the sound of the word; and in history and myth it is meaning. In poetry these two are subordinated to

the poetic or imaginative activity which is revealed in and through the proper embellishments and figurative devices arising from and contributing to *rasa*. The manner of expression distinguished a poem from other kinds. This was interpreted by Abhinava as the power of poetic suggestion.

Abhinavagupta (*Locana*, 40–1) held that the scriptural texts command us, while the mythological and historical texts remind us of our obligations in a gentle way like friends. These two give us knowledge. But poetry which offers only delight enters into the heart with love, like the beloved. Hemachandra observed that words and meanings are subordinated to Rasa and as such the poem appeals like the beloved. The poetic expression aims at beautitude *(ānanda)*. These observations are derived from Bhaṭṭanāyaka who remarked that the historical or mythological narratives offer lessons *(bodha)*, while the Vedic and the Śastraic texts give injunctions regarding conduct. In poetry we have only an aesthetic experience which arises form the activity of the creative imagination (*bhāvanā bhāvya*).

III

There is, however, a figure called *Vakrokti* which refers to a specific kind of poetic expression. Bhāmaha treated it as a general name for figures of speech (1.30; 2.85–87; 5.66). It is an expression which deviates from the normal one, and it is unique to poetry. Danḍin divided all kinds of poetic expression into those having the natural descriptive expression *(Svabhāvokti)*, and those having the striking or deviating expression (*Vakrokti*). Bhoja found a third group called *rasokti*, which is an expression embodying the aesthetic state of experience.

Kuntaka considered *Vakrokti* to be the distinguishing feature of all poetry. This *Vakrokti* is a unique manner of expression which differs from the non-poetic manners because it is the product of the poet's power. Kuntaka denies the name of poetry to a poetry of statement *(svabhāvokti)*. It can be poetry only if the statement is expressed in a strikingly out-of-the-normal way. Such an expression is poetic only when it can evoke a transcendental delight (*Vakrokti Jivitam*, 1.2, 7, 10, 42).

Danḍin also has a figure called *Vakrokti*. He held that this

figure becomes charming when it also involves a play on the meanings of the words *(śleṣa)*. Here is an analogue to Brooks' paradox, or Empson's ambiguity. We may also note that according to Rudraṭa this figure appears when there is a dialogue employing a clever intonation *(kāku)* to alter the meaning, or when there is a play on the meanings. Abhinava took *Vakrokti* to be synonymous with poetic activity.

IV

The New Critics seem to make a figurative device central to all poetry. Brooks admits that a poem expresses a truth which is not paraphrasable. His approach offers a scale of values having the 'difficult texts' at the top. The difficulty is resolved by him in terms of paradox, irony, wit, symbolic use of imagery, and the complexity of organization.

In his essay 'The Language of Paradox' (1942) he stated that 'there is a sense in which paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry. It is the scientist whose truth requires a language purged of every trace of paradox; apparently the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox.' 'The paradoxes spring from the very nature of the poet's language in which the connotations play as great a part as the denotations.' The scientist gives fixed denotations and thereby stabilizes the terms. 'The poet's tendency is disruptive' since he works by analogies. Even a 'simple and straightforward poet is forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument'. The direct methods of expression 'enfeeble and distort what is to be said'. The essence of poetic speech is ambiguity for Empson; and by ambiguity he means at one place 'any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language'.

The operative irony of James and the wit of Eliot are similar to Warren's concept of irony. It is a recognition of the 'possibility of other kinds of experience'. It is a structural principle, a device that 'can survive reference to the complexities and contradictions of experience'. The good poem is that which comes to terms with all the alternatives that try to undermine the poet's emotional convictions. The poetic structure, as Warren

understands it, involves resistances like those outlined by Coleridge. The poet 'proves his vision by submitting it to the fires of irony—to the drama of his structure'.

Brooks describes poetry in terms of structure. This structure is 'something far more internal than the metrical pattern, or than the sequence of images'. It is 'a structure of meanings, evaluations, and interpretations; and the principle of unity which informs it seems to be one of balancing and harmonising connotations, attitudes, and meanings'. This unity is 'an achieved harmony'. Such a structure involves ambiguity, paradox. complex of attitudes, and irony. Most of the distempers of criticism are traced by Brooks to the heresy of paraphrase, which contributes to a misunderstanding of the functions of metaphor and metre. The 'prose-sense' does not represent the inner, essential, or real structure of the poem. Ultimately any poem, we are told, is 'a structure of "gestures" or attitudes'. This structure seems to involve metaphor and irony.

Irony is 'the kind of qualification which the various elements in a context, receive from the context' and it is of 'tremendous importance'. Irony is the 'recognition of incongruities'. 'The same principle that insures the presence of irony in so many of our great poems also accounts for the fact that so many of them seem to be built around paradoxes' *(The Well Wrought Urn,* 178, 179, 185, 191–4). With paradox would sail ambiguity. The characteristics selected by these new critics depend mostly on their having applied to the poems a technique of reading; and this technique is determined by the very hypothesis they want to establish.

V

The ancient Indian critics thought of metaphor, paradox and irony not as features distinguishing poetry from the non-poetic modes of expression, but as devices. Metaphor *(rūpaka)* is only a kind of figurative expression. Another similar figure is *utprekṣā*. Brooks' paradox is the figure called *Virodha,* which is based on an apparent incongruity. Figures closely allied to this are *Vibhāvanā, Viṣama* and *Viśeṣokti.* Another related figure is *Vyājokti.* The concept of irony is closer to the figures

Vyājastuti and *Vyājanindā*. In these cases we understand praise or blame from the expressed opposites. They are respectively the figures of artful praise and artful blame. Irony in another sense appears as *Kāku* which involves a certain emphasis or modulation of the voice, resulting in the alteration of the sounds uttered.

The Indian way of looking at the cliches of Brooks is to treat them as figurative devices. As mere figures they are external or ornamental. But when they contribute to the suggestion of aesthetic experience, they become integral. Ānandavardhana *(Dhvanyāloka*, 2.29) would prefer having them under the gentle control of suggestion. On this theory the figure must emerge from the aesthetic experience. It must not require for its origination an effort other than that of the poetic expression. And it must be complex. More important than these is propriety. A figure is poetical if it emerges from and contributes to the explication of *rasa* and *bhāva*. The figure must always be a subordinate element, never the central or dominant factor. It must be neither too elaborate nor too overworked (see 2.6, 17-20). The Indian attitude would reject the criteria of Brooks since there can be poetry which may not employ any figurative device. Ambiguity and all similar forms of difficulty in comprehension are condemned as flaws. Where the meaning is obscure, it is a defect in the poem according to Bharata and Bhāmaha. The obscurity referred to appears when the expression is meant to convey a remote, hidden meaning.

VI

The new criticism has all the while sought to distinguish science from poetry, the language of science from that of poetry. They are united in taking poetry to be a discourse in words. They differ from one another in singling out the characteristic common to all kinds of poetry. The genus of their definitions is the differentia given by Aristotle. They faithfully followed division by dichotomy. On this basis poetry is said to be other than non-poetry; and yet a certain continuity between the two is preserved so that the difference becomes one of degree. Poetry exists for them in a 'verbal universe'. Thus we get back to Quintilian's *res* and *verba*, things and language; and into the

bargain is thrown the idea that poetry has no intrinsic nature save that of a difference from non-poetry. As a result poetry has come under rhetoric, dialectic, semantics, psychology, anthropology, or sociology. The very autonomy which they claim to defend, is lost.

The monistic cliche advocated by the New Critic does not seem to have a fixed meaning. As Empson stated in the Preface to the second edition of his *Ambiguity*, 'I would use the term ambiguity to mean anything I liked'. There is nothing distinctively poetic in these devices since any composition—even non-poetic—can employ them. The language in a good poem becomes poetic because of the function it serves there. Diction is only a medium. The enquiry must therefore be from function to device, not the other way.

One can, if he has the will and ability, make any poem he likes conform to this cliche. The normal reader does not know at what point the critic reads into the poem his formula. Some of these critics seem to write for other critics. They do not appear to realize that literature is related to life. They look upon a poem as if it were intended only to make the critic's analysis of it possible. The critical monism of the New Critics reminds us of Santayana's observation that 'the arts may die of triviality, as they were born of enthusiam'. If literary theory is scientific it must accept the universals; and without destroying these universals, we have to consider poetry as a whole and specify the parts 'with the maximum differentiation possible'. This will enable us in understanding the nature of poetry. The definition of the given species of art must give an account of what is imitated (object), in what (means), how (manner), and to what effect. The medium of poetry consists of rhythms and words. As an imitation in a certain means poetry is said to imitate action, character, or thought. The object imitated is that which rhythms can take or which they can imply by signs. The artistic whole involves the object, means, manner and effect. When this is analyzed, we get the principal part and the subsidiary parts. Each is a whole in its own way, and all the parts are inter-related in accordance with the law of probability and necessity. The

beauty of the whole presupposes a certain magnitude.

As against this, if we define a poem in terms of the words, it would be, as Olson said, like defining a chair as a piece of wood. The chair is a kind of furniture, and poetry is a kind of art which may be mimetic or didactic. The words in a poem are determined by everything else found in the poem. Since words 'function' in poetry, they must be subordinate to the function. The function determines the choice and arrangement of words and it is revealed in and through the emotional quality and imaginative apprehension of the ideas. This is ignored by New Criticism. Even if we define poetry in terms of a special kind of use to which words are put, we must realize that words do not function in the same way in an epigram, didactic poem, satire or tragedy. In other words, the monistic cliche derived from language cannot be a poetic principle. The facts do not imply it, nor does it imply the facts. It may be valid in a given poem; but validity does not mean universality. What is essential to symbolist-metaphysical poetry need not be, and it is not, essential to all good poetry. It is a pity that these critics claiming to be logical confuse validity in one context with universality. Moreover, if we can inquire into a characteristic common to all art, we can also inquire into a special characteristic of each art.

Our emotions are determined by the object imitated, not so much by the diction. These are modified by the manner in which the characters and incidents are revealed to us. Then the words employed modify these emotions, and we have a particular kind of feeling which is unique to the given work of art. The action up to a given point, the specific speech-action, the diction, the figurative devices and the like are together the causes of the emotion we experience. Bharata was wiser when he said that the aesthetic state emerges from *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *sancāribhāvas*. The New Critics have confused a work of art with the work of an artist. This is evident in the confused thinking about ontology, a word not to be played with.

VII

The two basic themes of *The World's Body* (1938) are that *(i)* poetry is knowledge, by imagery, of the fullness and particularity

of nature; and that (*ii*) the function of form lies in restraining the appetite, thereby promoting the contemplation of imagery. Ransom recognized the importance of ideas and of the logical argument of the poem. He felt that so-called pure poetry is unnatural. He sought beauty united with truth and goodness (259, 72, 241). All good poetry on this count will be impure. He argued that the essential element in the poetic experience is cognition, not instruction. The poem has a particularity; but Ransom did not know how 'real particularity could get into a universal' (*The Intent of the Critic*, ed. Stauffer, 109). He didn't know because he rejected both Hegel and science. We read that metre, diction, and the tropes tend to add to 'the volume of the percipenda and sensibilia'. The tropes 'invite perpetual attention, and weaken the tyranny of science over senses'. This is unproven. Ransom states in *The World's Body* (67) that the word in poetry can evoke many associations which make it concrete. But this concreteness does not prevent it from becoming vague or ambiguous. Paradoxically we are told (*Kenyon Review*, X. 387) that the poetic use of language is meant 'to denote natural objects as given, contingent, today as existential; to be received in the fulness which is their givenness'. The givenness need not enable us to grasp them as they really are. The artist is interested in individuals in their individuality, and in the things in their thingness. But 'if he is of a mature or observant mind his individuals are likely to be rich and suggestive' (*The World's Body*, 206), because of their realized particularity. What do these terms mean ?

It is assumed that the mental image is richer, clearer, and exact. From this it is argued that the poet reports more qualities than the scientist can. Tate even believed that the poem offers a 'complete' knowledge. The artistic frame for Ransom includes the 'irrelevant local texture'. He arrives at this on the basis of a dialectic which opposes the conceptual knowledge to the 'wild particularity of things'. From this he derives the opposition of idea to image, of science to art, of the poetry of feelings to the metaphysical' poetry and so on. But science and art are only contraries, for, 'science gratifies a rational or practical impulse

and exhibits a minimum of perception. Art gratifies a perceptual impulse and exhibits the minimum of reason.' Hence the poem must be a composite of 'logical structure' and of 'irrelevant texture'. This method has a hypothesis as its starting point, and it is arbitrarily chosen.

The density and particularity of 'texture' of the poem has to be supported by the logical structure (*New Criticism*, 269). The poetic value depends upon the local texture supported by the structure. Scientific discourse has only a structure. Poetry employs both. Science tries to show that something is true or false, while art has to achieve the trope; and the trope should not become a proposition. By texture Ransom meant the rich local values, the quality of a thing in its thingness. The argument of the poem is its structure. It gives a shape, regulates the data, and provides order. Texture is not at all relevant to the logic of the poem. But it does influence the shape by impeding the argument. That is, the argument gets complicated because it is hindered or diverted and threatened. The logic of the poem thus seeks to remind us of the aspects of reality that we cannot ignore. The structure of a poem gives us knowledge of the universals, while its texture offers the knowledge of the particulars. If science presents the universals, poetry can offer only an apprehension of particulars. This is a rejection of Aristotle's statement that poetry only *tends* to express the universal.

Ransom is then led to state that unlike prose, poetry has 'the fringe of feelings,' it has 'the local particularity of meaning'. This 'constitutes everywhere in the poem a vivid texture; and clearly this is essential' (221). Ransom ignores the structure of the paraphrasable content. This is because he confuses three different structures : structure of the poem, structure of the paraphrasable content, and the structure of the paraphrase. Ransom brings in structure only for an analogy. A poem has only a logical verbal organization and it has a logical structure in a metaphoric way. Ransom is guilty of dichotomizing the form-content unity and of ignoring the aesthetic effect of this unity. Because of this unnatural dichotomy he could say that 'art gratifies a perceptual impulse and exhibits a minimum of reason'.

This view was later modified by him.

When Ransom states that a poem 'is a loose logical structure with an irrelevant local texture', his friend Tate stated : 'The formal qualities of a poem are the focus of the specifically critical judgment because they partake of an objectivity that the subject matter, abstracted from the form, wholly lacks' (*The American Scholar*, IX. 456).

The passion for form has become a fetish and it became a symbol for a certain order, a mystic entity, a touchstone of dubious value. Not one of the New Critics could tell us what the word means. It is indeterminate. Each critic somehow *felt* it to stand for his secret ideal. Cleanth Brooks treats form as semantic structure, and content as its paraphrasable statement. Wellek and Warren have an outer form and an inner form. According to Leavis form is concrete presentment and it is related to content or the moral preoccupations of the artist.

All varieties of poetry are treated by the New Critics not as different forms or kinds, but as one. There is only one homogeneous kind of poetry. Then the structure of all poetry is the same. This necessitates the concept of an all-inclusive kind of structure, so that we can apply it to the poems of Donne, Keats, Wordsworth, Yeats, Homer or Eliot. For Brooks poetry has the structure of 'paradox' because 'even the apparently simple and straightforward poet is forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument...The method is an extension of the normal language of poetry.' That is, the necessity here is not determined by the effect or end the poet has, but by the medium chosen. The medium is said to move in that direction. Since language is basically common to science and to poetry, and since the poet's materials are non-scientific language and thought, the materials give rise to tensions, and the structure resolves them by providing an equilibrium. 'The essential structure of a poem', says Brooks (*Urn*, 177-199), 'is a pattern of resolved stresses...It is a pattern of resolution and balances and harmonizations...'

VIII

The problems raised by Ransom refer to semantics and ontology. We begin with the first. The word has a primary or

literal meaning determined by usage. In the secound place, the meaning may be determined by the character or purpose of the speaker, or by the manner of delivery. Thirdly, meaning may result from what is implied. The implied meaning need not be a part of the literal meaning. There may also be an implication unrelated to the meaning.

What we mean by the meaning of a poem is a meaning suggested by the emotional apprehension of the total presentation. The poem is not identical with the diction. The meanings conveyed by words are modified in a poem by the man-in-action expressing them. The words do not stand for their lexical meanings alone; for they constantly point to and are pointed by character, situation, thought, passion. An ironical tone or a metaphor or tension or a paradox would be valid in a poem only when therc is a reason to justify the employment of it by the character. The words take us to the character and the character will have to justify them.

As against this we find the New Critics busy with words and meanings, with images and symbols, and with metaphors and referents. To render these clear (?) they have enquired into the nature of language used by the poets. The result is bewildering. Brooks says that 'form' in poetry is 'meaning' and that 'literature is ultimately metaphorical and symbolic' (*Kenyon Review,* XIII. 72). Wellek and Warren take the poem to be 'a system of signs' (141). For Richards it is 'a fabric of meaning'. Wimsatt (PMLA, LXV. 20) finds that any good poem must have 'a total metaphoric relation' to 'the reality or the many circles of reality to which it refers.' This enquiry presupposes a difference between the meaning of a prose discourse and that of a poem. While science or rational prose gives statements of facts, says Cleanth Brooks, poetry offers implications of 'attitudes, feelings, and interpretations'. Northrop Frye (*Univ, of Toronto Quarterly,* XIX. 12-16) would credit poetry with 'hypothetical' structures which affirm, like those of mathematics, only possibilities. According to Ransom. poetry shares with science some 'rational', 'logical', 'paraphrasable', or 'prose' meaning; and in addition it has something that makes it poetry. Others distinguish poetry

from science in terms of the presence in the former of a complex or difficult sort of meaning which admits an indirect expression through metaphor, symbol, or myth.

Here a helpful outlook comes from Indian poetics. The problem of poetic meaning was explored by the Indian critics much more thoroughly. A word has at least four capacities. These are *abhidhā, tātparya, lakṣaṇā,* and *vyanjanā.* The first is the primary or literal meaning sanctioned by convention and usage. It refers to the objects in general. It cannot refer to a particular object since the word expresses a universal. When we take it to refer to the particular, we take recourse to that capacity which the word gets from the explicit purport of the sentence *(tātparya)*. But take the expressions; 'the hamlet on the Ganges', 'he is a lion'. Here we do have a purport; but it does not make sense. There can be no hamlet on the waters of the Ganges, and a human being cannot be a lion. The meaning is incompatible with the facts and we have to reject the primary meaning of the words and the purport of the sentence as well. We consider in such cases the motive of the speaker, the linguistic conventions, or the meaning related to these varieties. Thus we interpret the two expressions to mean 'the hamlet *on the banks of* the Ganges', and 'he is like a lion'. This is a meaning by inference or implication (*lakṣaṇā)*. The primary sense may be included or excluded; it may be partially given up; or it may acquire an addition. Certain metaphorical expressions actually come under *lakṣaṇā*.

But 'the hamlet on the Ganges' can have another meaning. Because I associate coolness and sanctity with the Ganges, I mean a cool and sacred hamlet on the banks of the Ganges. This is not the primary or inferred meaning. It is not a meaning derived from memory. It is not the purport of the sentence; nor is it the implied sense. The meaning I derive is through the power of suggestion (*dhvani, vyanjanā)*. Now the term *poetry* can be applied, according to some Indian critcs, only to that poem whose essence reveals a suggested meaning, and whose beautiful body called word-meaning unity accepts the embellishments and figures and reveals propriety.

The suggested meaning may arise in a variety of ways. In all cases it must have a direct relation to the aesthetic state or experience. Innumerable varieties have been worked out on the basis of intention, motive, theme, figure, sentence, word and the like. Only a senstive student of literature *(Sahṛdaya)* who has repeatedly experienced great works of art, has a certain alertness and sensitivity and he grasps this suggestion : and what is ultimatlely suggested is *rasa,* the aesthetic state (*Locana*, 56-63, 68). Hence the real distinguishing feature of poetry is said to be *rasa-dhvani*; and this is always indicative of genius (*Dhvanyāloka*, 1.6). Genius, said Bhaṭṭa Tauta, is an ability to construct unparalleled or incomparable wholes (*Locana*, 92).

Another line was pursued by Bhaṭṭanayaka who accepted three capacities: primary meaning *(adhidhā)*, imaginative activity *(bhāvanā)*, and the power to realize *(bhogikriti)*. After the primary meaning is clear, imagination transforms it by universalizing it, and experience or realization makes it actual *(Abhinavabhāratī*, 1.277). The non-poetic expression has only a primary or accepted meaning. It is the poetic expression that is charged with imaginative activity. The meaning in a poem, from the Indian standpoint, is either that suggested by the words or that revealed by the imagination. This avoids the meanderings of our New Critics.

IX

Let us now turn to ontology for a change. A poem for Ransom is not a transcript of reality. It is not even a philosophical exposition. But it must have 'the substance of a philosophical conclusion'. Commenting on Tate's attempt to represent the chaotic life of the mind directly, Ransom wrote in February 1923: 'You are attempting an art of the sub-rational. To me that seems unnecessary . Isn't it an assumption that the poetic is antithetical to the rational?'. If so, we cannot allow the critic's flights of fancy to discover multiple layers which seem to crush the symbolist-metaphysical poets beyond all recovery. Ransom who saw poetry in the irrelevant elements of the structure, stated in may 1924: 'Form is organic with the matter...It is the formal preoccupation that destroys art, which must not appear

meditated; nor *be* meditated, for that matter'. That is, the interest of a poem comes from its subject alone. Its value depends on the number and vividness of the details it offers to the sensibility. These are the details for recognition. Ransom here neglects the artistic frame of reference and this leads him to ignore the transmutation of the material. The transmuted material has its own set of values. The failure to recognize this is the result of his concern for the poem-reality relation, not for the poem-reader relation. In other words, he ignores the truth of Aristotle's statement—'from art proceed the things of which the form is in the soul of the artist' (*Metaphysics*, 2.7).

A few questions have to be answered by these New Critics: *(i)* Is the poem a thing-in-itself, or does it somehow represent something external to itself ? *(ii)* If the poem offers knowledge, is it knowledge by revelation of what is represented? Is it knowledge by interpretation? Does it refer to the universal form and human values? *(iii)* How far is the meaning of the poem relevant to us as human beings? How does it become relevant? What does this relevance mean? Is our evaluation moulded by our ideas concerning human values? It is however, not easy to discover the human values cherished by these critics who talk of ontology.

Ransom's 'fury against abstractions' led him to regard irony 'as the ultimate mode of the great minds'; it 'presupposes the others.' This irony implies 'an honourable and strenuous period of romantic creation: it implies then a rejection of the romantic forms and formulas; but this rejection is so unwilling, and in its statements there lingers so much of the music and color and romantic mystery which is perhaps the absolute poetry...that the fruit of it is widom and not bitterness, poetry not prose, health not suicide. Irony is the rarest of the state of mind, because it is the most inclusive' (*The Fugitive*, IV. 63-64). This rare state is a dualistic one. For Ransom believed that opposites can never be resolved or reconciled. Only a logical resolution is possible. 'When there is no resolution we have a poem without a structural unity; and this is precisely the intention of irony.' Unity or fusion is declared to be an 'impractical ideal'. Irony indicates the failure to achieve the unity, and 'the oppositions produce

an indecisive effect' (*The Criticism*, 95-6, 183). But is the poem then always a replica of the vacillating mind? The theoretical writings of Ransom constantly take us to dualism, contrast, correlation, and personification. These refer to his conviction regarding the conflict between reason and sensibility. In spite of this dualistic preoccupation, he spoke in September 1926 of the 'reconciliation between the Conceptual or Formal and Individual or Concrete'. But *his* reason overruled his sensibility when he wrote to Tate in the spring of 1927: 'Art is our refusal to yield to the blandishments of 'constructive' philosophy and permit the poignant and actual Dichotomy to be dissipated in a Trichotomy; our rejection of Third terms; our denial of Hegel's right to solve a pair of contradictons with a Triad. And here's a slogan: Give us Dualism or we'll give you no Art.' New Criticism then is a projection of Ransom's training at Oxford in the rejection idealism. But in this dualism which term is more important? Tate argued for the 'effect upon conduct'. 'In The Man of Letters in the Modern World' (1951-52) he stated that 'the true province of the man of letters is nothing less than culture itself'. Does poetry offer the culture of the emotions? Ransom will claim wholeness to these fragments.

The poem, says Tate in his *Reason and Madness* (135), is 'a kind of knowledge that we did not possess before'. It is 'the fullness of that knowledge'. And yet we are told that we cannot restate what the particular poem says. The inherent value of a poem, we are told, is a cognitive one in the sense that the poem gives us the 'knowledge of a whole object'. Tate does not appear to recognize the difference between complete knowledge and knowledge of a complete object. Moreover, how does this knowledge differ from that given by a scientist or a philosopher? Tate assumes it differs.

The organic structure of a poem is said to be similar to the structure of the world. A poem becomes obscure because of the associations in the structure of the world: 'obscurity is a poetic and ontological device' (*The Southern Review*, VII. 534). Then Ransom has not overcome the fallacy of expressiveness, nor has he answered it. The natural object and the poetic representation

have an ontological similarity, not a one-to-one correspondence. In trying to explain this Ransom borrowed the Hegelian concept of the Concrete Universal and successfully misinterpreted it. Thus he could speak of a particular universal, a self-contradictory concept. Then he brought forth a moral universal and sought to relate it to the details. As a moral universal, the poem would use nature as end; and 'the concrete element is an area of nature existing in its natural conformations as these are given, and discovered'. Metaphor represents this universal and nature is said to 'accept the universal readily into its infinite system' (*Poems and Essays*, 100, 166, 181). But it cannot be a universal since it has the irrelevant in it. Ransom, like his logical positivist teachers, is not worried about these contradictions and inconsistencies. The structure-texture complex is *assumed* to correspond to the constitution of the world. And yet the poem is taken to be a whole experience in itself, though he will deny the poem a life of its own, since such a view 'is very nearly a doctrine of automatism' (*New Criticism*, 125). Where then is the ontological similarity? Is it between order and disorder? If, as Ransom says, the work of art is not the final end and if it initiates us into the aesthetic life, the very idea of the full being of a work of art is at stake.

Ransom held in *The World's Body* (347ff.) that the poem presents 'an order of existence which in actual life is constantly crumbling beneath the poet's touch', and the 'poem is a desperate ontological or metaphysical manoeuvre'. The manoeuvre is truly a desperate one when we go through his comparison of Donne with Shakespeare. He finds Shakespeare to be inferior to Donne because the former 'had no university discipline, and developed along lines of least resistance'; he 'was no aristocrat' and he 'got into the rather low profession of acting'; he never underwent 'the torment of that terrible problem; the problem of poetic strategy'. Shakespeare was the luckiest poet because only in modern times has poetry become academic, being cherished in the universities. Ransom admits it: 'the proper seat of criticism is in the universities'. If literature is withdrawn from life into the classroom, and if imagination is revealed in

and through technical analysis alone, criticism becomes a machine operating on poetry having tension and difficulty acceptable to these critics. Thus we are enlightened by Ransom's rejection of Shakespeare's 73rd sonnet and Leavis's condemnation of Shelley's *Ode.*

X

Indian poetics set out to discover what makes a poem truly poetic. In this quest it began with a profound insight that a work of art is artistic when it evokes the experience of *rasa.* The emphasis is on the aesthetic experience of the reader and of the artist as well. Next it enquired into the charcter of that which evokes this experience. But all through these critics preserved the autonomy and higher reality of art. Bharata said (1.116): 'if knowledge, sculpture, art, concentration and activity are not found in art, they cannot be found anywhere else'. The author of *Dhvanyāloka* (1.13; 3.40-42; 4.12-13) was positive when he outlined the relationship between the work of art and the world around us. He stated : 'the poem may be related to the object by way of a reflection'. But since a reflection cannot claim full reality, this photographic realism has to be rejected. It may be an imitation of the given. But this too has to be rejected because a simple imitation would always be an imitation. Another kind of relation appears when the poem has a form similar to the given, and is yet different. This is acceptable to Ānandavardhana. The similarity-in-difference makes the work of art influential on human life. The unique nature of the work was explained by Bhaṭṭa Tauta when he said that one who is not a s er cannot be a poet. A seer is one who sees, and what he *sees* is a revelation of an aspect of truth under specific characteristics. Such a seer gives poems only when this seeing is fused with describing. The seeing constitutes the difference, while the describing accounts for the similarity.

XI

We may now look at the kinds of poetry possible. According to Ransom there is 'physical poetry' which seeks to present the precise qualities of things by using hard, clear, accurate images. Such a presentation is limited and unsatisfactory. Ranson even

calls it a tolerably 'pure poetry' which has to be contemplated upon or enjoyed. Even if it is unsatisfactory, 'all true poetry is a phase of physical poetry'. The second is the poetry of ideas, 'Platonic poetry', which is no poetry at all. Here the reader is roused to assume an ethical attitude. It 'is allegory, a discourse in things', and an 'elaboration of ideas'. Ransom is contemptuous of this kind and he reduces it to the level of science. Ransom pleads for the third variety called 'metaphysical poetry', which uses the devices of figurative language to startle the reader into new perceptions. Art must gratify, he says, 'a perceptual impulse and exhibit the minimum of reason'. To increase 'the volume of the *percipenda* or *sensibilia*', poets have developed the devices called metre, diction, and tropes. This poetry 'suggests to us that object is perceptually or physically remarkable'. Metaphysical poetry is accepted because it uses 'miraculism', the extended metaphor, and partial analogy; and because is draws our attention to thing. These assertions are dogmatic. He does not go into the merits of the first two kinds; and he is interested in limiting the function of poetry because of his predilections in favour of the pseudoclassical poetry of Eilot and others.

In 'Three Types of Poetry' (1934) Tate held that the first one is 'genuine' poetry, as the poetry of Shakespeare. It arises from 'the power of seizing the inward meaning of experience, the power of sheer creation...the vision of the whole of life'. The second is the allegorical poetry which emerges from the practical will; and this is the modern situation in literature. Such a poetry seems to reject inward necessity or probability. The third one is the poetry of Romantic irony and it too rises from the practical will. Here the will may assert a proposition, but the imagination has to seize upon the materials and make them into a whole. The proposition has to become an experienced statement. Rejecting Shelley's image of life as unpoetic and accepting 'ripeness is all' as poetic, Tate treats the latter as 'experienced statement' and therefore 'significant and comprehensible'. We do not know what happens to the vision of the whole life. Probably the vision has the 'quality of experience' and it is then

verifiable. But Tate denies external verification and argues that the reader can grasp it only by an imaginative act. The poem offers then an unproved statement, an unverifiable statement.

XII

Indian poetics approaches this problem in a different way. Admitting that there are as many varieties of poetry as there are poets, these critics are agreed in observing that there are great poets, ordinary poets and bad poets. For the sake of convenience only three kinds of poetry are recognized. Ānandavardhana and his followers state that the best variety is the poetry of suggestion. Here suggestion is the dominant feature. A tolerable kind is one where suggestion is subordinated to embellishments and devices. The third is the worst kind where we have verbal and semantic gymnastics. Ransom's best is the last one, or it is between the last two.

Kuntaka in his *Vakrokti Jivitam* (1.25-52) classified poetry into three groups on the basis of style. The first is the graceful way (*sukumāra mārga*). It has an easy flow. The genius of the poet here offers a fresh insight, and the meaning like the word is original and delightful. The poet never forgets the importance of the ideas and the experiences; and he reveals the hidden beauty of the universe. The second is the poetry of the special way *(vicitra mārga)*. Here the expression is out of normal and it is suggestively handled. Figurative devices are freely employed even to beautify the figures. This is the poetry of the scholastic poet, and it agrees with Ransom's best variety. The third is the middle way *(madhyama mārga)* and here is a mixture of both the styles. The first variety of Tate comes between the first and the second of Kuntaka's. The Indian attitude rejects the claims of the symbolist-metaphysical kind of poetry to the highest position.

The Indian attitude gives the central place to the aesthetic state or experience called *rasa* which is realized in and through the power of suggestion or that of imagination. As Ānandavardhana put it in his *Dhvanyāloka* (1.2, 4, 12), the soul of poem is that realized and cherished by the sensitive student of poetry. He cherishes it for what it suggests; and the power of suggestion resides in the poem, as beauty *(lāvaṇya)* in a woman. It is not

to be found in any part, for it is the enlivening principle of the whole. Every good poem involves the power of suggestion, the medium of suggestion, and what is suggested *(Vyanjana, Vyanjaka, and Vyangya)*. This is a more comprehensive way of looking at poetry.

V. Y. Kantak

BHARATA AND THE WESTERN CONCEPT OF DRAMA

To try to probe the basic conceptual patterns implicit in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* the Aristotelian poetic is a convenient starting point—a sort of jumping-off plank for a risky dive into the *Nāṭyaśāstra's* dark serene waters. For one thing, the conceptual tools we use today are themselves derived from Western tradition of thought largely initiated by Plato and Aristotle. Again, the Aristotelian poetic offers a kind of model—in many ways a sharply contrasting formulation in reference to which those features that are peculiar to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* view could be set off and identified.

Such at least is the hope. In actual practice we are so used to measuring everything by the Aristotelian yardstick, as though what he said is the irreducible idea of drama anywhere, anytime, that we are inclined to treat the curious *Nāṭyaśāstra* conception as a somewhat childish freak or aberration from the norm—the Aristotelian prototype. Didn't a Beredale Keith commiserate Kālidāsa for his incapacity to rise to the heights of Tragedy, and lament the lack of true characterization and psychological plausibility in Sanskrit drama? It is as though we commiserated Sophocles for being but a feeble approach to Shakespeare and condoled with Aeschylus for his total want of interest in the Elizabethan psychology of the Malcontent-Hero!

I said 'we' advisedly. It is not only the Western scholars; our Indian scholars, too, see it the same way—more or less. *They* have some excuse, we have none. Or, may be, recognizing a generic difference, at best we take recource to some attractive, emotionally satisfying generalization. This, for instance: In the Aristotelian and Western dramatic mode, it is 'action' with its spell-binding, energetic quality that has the primacy; while in Bharata it is 'sentiment'—that inadequate and somewhat obscuring translation of *Rasa*. And such a juxtaposition may be taken to reflect the essential masculinity and femininity of the respective

cultural moulds in which the two kinds of drama germinated. There certainly is an important point and an element of truth in such a comparison—except perhaps for the unfortunate implication of inferiority ascribed to the feminine! (These hidden traces of male chauvinism may be galling. But there it is. It is somehow easier to imagine godhead in terms of an old Wizard or Joker—or may be, Emily Dickinson's 'Papa above'—than as *Śakti* imaged in the full force and splendour of a woman's personality...)

All this because, understandably, it is so difficult to enter into the spirit of that older form, to let our awareness flow into an older groove of feeling, get under the skin, so to say, of another generation distant in time though not in consanguinity, to be able to give that form some definition.

To aid such an effort we may begin by inquiring : what *is* involved in the prestigious Aristotelian concept? First of all, it is possible to say that Aristotle's approach to poetry and art in general is of greater universal validity than his approach to drama. The latter, as was but natural, was heavily biased by a closeness to Greek practice, to Tragedy especially—that great artistic achievement of the Greek spirit. Consider his characteristic insight into the sources of poetry: 'Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature...Imitation is one instinct of our nature. Next, there is the instinct for harmony and rhythm.' In these words we sense at once the great initiator of psychology and the positivistic sciences.

Now, that is a statement about art in general and not only about the nature of drama. These two impulses—to imitate and to seek harmony and rhythm—are at the basis of drama at the one end, and music (what he calls 'flute-playing and lyre-playing') at the other. If imitation has to be true of drama and poetry as well as music it can only be interpreted in a broader sense than what is implied by 'mimicking' or 'copying'. What is implicit in Aristotle's statement is that a certain kind of imitativeness or 'histrionic' sensibility lies at the heart of the activity called art and that such a sensibility combines variously with rhythm, language

and harmony. Imitation is used here, it would seem, more in a metaphorical sense to describe the activity of the creative imagination, the kind of 'imaging' that is involved in all art—something like the force of the analogical activity, the seeing of one thing in terms of another which is at the root of simile and metaphor, or, in an extended sense, what is described as Imagery.

As to imitation in drama, we can only liken it to a kind of 'feigning' or 'playing'. Such a 'playing' we observe also in the play of kittens or in the primitive man's hunting dance or war-dance. The actions of hunting or of heroic defiance in this *mimic* form become more rhythmic and harmonious than those of real fighting or hunting. So the two instincts that Aristotle indentifies work together in art. In this sense, too, we are all actors imitating when we feel our way histrionically through the tangle of personal relationships; it is the kind of 'imaging' which helps us gain direct perception of a man's real motives discounting his rationalizations.

At any rate, Aristotle's pronouncements have a philosophical basis which critics like Paul Ricoeur have tried to spell out: *mimesis* is to be understood only in the context of 'making'; it is operative in forming, creating a plot, a work of art. It is the structure of plot that constitutes mimesis. It presents man as acting, as alive. Nature is not something inert; and poetry's power is to make contact with 'Being' as such. That is its ontological function in which dormant potentiality of existence appears as blossoming forth, what is indicated by the Greek word 'phusis' —the active principle of the growing things in nature. *What is imitated is lifelikeness*, the potentiality of 'becoming' that is implicit in a thing, in *phusis*. Drama imitated not the particular forms of behaviour in a possible actual situation but the power that works behind such forms. It's like a creeper putting forth new leaves as it grows and moves along, or like a character expressing itself in new behaviour-patterns in the process of becoming.

This inner philosophic impulsion of the original mimetic concept is found glanced at variously in the text of *Poetics* itself as in those celebrated passages which tell us that for the purpose

of poetry : 'A likely impossibility is preferable to an improbable or unconvincing possibility.' Or that in character-drawing and plot-making, 'One should keep an eye always on the *necessary* or the *probable* so that whenever such-and-such a personage says or does such-and-such a thing, it shall be the probable or necessary result of his character.' And that an event following another shall be 'the necessary and probable consequence thereof.' We are aware of that background also in passages like : 'That is why poetry requires a man with special gifts of nature and temperament or else a touch of madness or *Ekstatikoi*.'

But what actually mimesis has come to mean in practice is something rather different. It is a misfortune of criticism that the same term 'imitation' has to be used to describe this generic or primary sense of 'imaging' in art and the more literal sense of a realistic 'mimicking' of action upon the stage. The difficulty arises when we ask : what is the distinctive feature of drama that sets it off from the other arts ? Since imitation in the metaphorical sense is common to all arts, one *is likely to assume* that imitation in the more literal sense of a realistic mimicking is the differentia of drama—a mimicking that has a proper regard for those norms of time and place, of circumstantial and psychological plausibility, that we assume to be true of our everyday existences. This is not always a matter of a conscious adoption of dogma. But some such bias, some such covert limitation, has conditioned the dramatic practice and the critical tradition Aristotle inspired. Which is largely true of the entire course of the Western dramatic tradition taken as a whole.

So that what we mean by Western mimetic drama and its broad typical features—for which also there is warrant enough in Aristotle—is something like this : 'Western drama shows human activity in the complex, ambiguous, movement of character; it presents a focal point in actual time, with men caught up in life's fitful fever, and images the tumult of life. The mimetic concept naturally stresses action, character, situation, and above all *conflict* which it makes the fulcrum of the action. And the dramatic structure is addressed to realising that prime aim, making plot the soul of Tragedy, for instance, as Aristotle says

it is. All is governed by plausibilities of psychology and situation. In general, it images the urgency of the living process as we know it, and Time—the linear, irreversible notion of time—is essential to it...' For all of which there is adequate basis in Aristotelian mimesis though its broader aspects and possibilities may not receive the same attention.

Not that Western drama is all of a piece, nor that the force of the original concept is entirely lost. Greek drama itself, whether Aeschylian or Sophoclean Tragedy or Aristophanic Comedy was far from realistic in technique. The lyrical and ritual elements had a dominant role; character interest in the modern sense was nugatory, and in some respects it had vital similarities with the Eastern theatre. None the less, it did lay down the pattern of the Western mode. Psychological realism and realism of situation was already making itself felt in Euripides, and the future flowering of the drama of individual character was already foreshadowed in his work.

Again, in another sense, the original philosophical verve is reflcted in that magnificent, dynamic tradition of drama that the doctrine created. The constantly changing and restless theatre activity of European and American drama to which the great renaissance Shakespeare as well as the modern Strindbergs, Pirandellos, Brechts and Becketts belong...reflects and bodies forth that same sense of a 'becoming' inherent in Aristotelian thought. And it does so both synchronically and diachronically, so to say, constantly evolving new elements of structure within the drama itself and giving rise to vogue after vogue of fresh theatre styles in its long history. Innovatory developments like the drama of existentialist inspiration or of the Theatre of the Absurd testify to its vitality. There has also been much straining at the Aristotelian leash and some peeping over the fence at the Eastern modes, adapting them to new uses as in the poetic plays of W. B. Yeats...and so on. All the time, its foundation and artistic concerns, however, have remained firmly Aristotelian and mimetic. The rallying cry voiced in the Western theatre from time to time has been, 'Back to the Aristotelian dictum: All arts are modes of imitation and what drama imitates is actions of men'.

Consequently, the Aristotelian view of drama doesn't appear wide enough to include dramatic modes that developed independently in the East—whether Indian, Japanese or Chinese. There is never any ambiguity or doubt about the distinct character of the Eastern drama; a cursory comparison of a Sanskrit play or a Noh play with a Western classic brings out the great gulf that separates the two traditions. The difference is reflected in the theoretical formulations based on these diverse practices—as is obvious if we set Aristotle's *Poetics* beside Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* or *The Kadensho* of Zeami, the foremost exponent of the Noh. The very notions of 'action' and of Time seem to alter themselves. How does one go about indicating that difference ? It is so like the difference that Yeats had perceived—between the West's *penchant* for numbers, calculation, measurement, as opposed to those 'Asiatic vague immensities' that characterize the East.

To begin with, we note that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is at once a treatise on Dance and Drama as a composite art with Music as a natural ingredient. There is this peculiar integration of music, poetry, dance and drama that calls for attention. Dance and drama are indeed so close that the root-word for drama *naṭ* is supposed to be the *Prakrit* form of *nṛt* which means 'to dance.' The common point between them, between *Nāṭya and Nṛtya* is *Abhinaya—āṅgika, vācika, āhārya* and *sāttvika*, which makes them two near synonymous terms in Sanskrit usage, despite the the technical difference. Indeed, dance and drama are so intimately fused that in texts like *Harivanśa* and *Karpūramanjarī* the expression used is 'dance a drama' to mean 'perform' a play.

The nature of that integration is a major departure from the Aristotelian conception. True, in the Greek drama, the Chorus with its combination of dance and lyric performs a role; but it is a separate entity with a definite function. The choric and the dramatic elements retain a certain identity severally. Even when Nietszche visualised Tragedy as primarily Dionysian (in his Essay *The Birth of Tragedy*) he emphasizes the dialectical relationship that must exist between the action and dialogue (the Apollonian element) on the one hand and the song and dance

of the Chorus (the Dionysian element) on the other. In the Indian dramatic concept the component of dance and lyric does not in any sense *subserve* the drama. The whole structure is poetically conceived in quite a different way, the dance and lyric being essential ingredients of its texture and technique.

This synthetic conception is the first premise of the Sanskrit theatre. As has been said often, the staging of drama in Asia is primarily the problem of enacting poetry. It follows a poetic logic of its own rather than that of an action-packed story and has therefore little use for the unities of time, place, and action. These would be powerful aids if the purpose were to emphasize the physical features of the action in the enactment. Whereas, in the Sanskrit theatre, poetry retards the normal speed of action of deliberate purpose and induces a 'static' mood. This is actually drama's strength rather than weakness because the surplus time thus released is needed to enlarge and draw out a movement, a gesture—allow it time to register—so as to bring the dominant sentiment to a ripe fullness. As a Noh critic might say: 'In this on-stage leisure the artistic purpose of a scene blooms.' So action may disappear in the wings while lyric takes over and finely elaborates the *Rasa*. Poetry helps the actor to enrich his action, to extend its eseential quality beyond what a straight enactment of the scene itself could produce.

(This adaptation of 'recitative' as part of drama, it appears, has had a curious progeny; it has given rise to that song-deluged hotch-potch which has become the hallmark of the popular film today and draws enormous crowds!)

When translated in terms of the Western mode of presentation, this purpose is lost, and a heavily drenched scene like Śakuntalā's departure from Kaṇvāshram in the Fourth Act, simply becomes ridiculous in its poetic prolixity. But for the Indian concept the essence of the drama lies in this function of poetry and not just in the mimic rendering of the story sequence. This is action, not merely recitative: 'One should take good care of words,' says Bharata, meaning poetry, 'for these are the body of the dramatic art (*nāṭya)*. The gestures, costumes, make-up and temperamental *(sāttvic*) acting merely clarify the meaning of

words'.[1] There is never any ambiguity or doubt about this claim to poetry as action on the stage. *Nāṭya* is both *dṛśya* and *śravya*, being a *dṛśyakāvya* or 'visual' poetry. That was the original supplication of the Devas to Prajāpati : *Krīḍanīyakamicchāmo dṛśyaṁ śravyaṁ ca yad bhavet*.[2]

This, then constitutes 'action' on the stage, action impregnated with poetry and so 'subtilized'—not merely the motives and activities of men and the events that result from them. It is a kind of quintessential action that has been extracted from the chaos of raw life. Indeed, Asiatic drama, Japanese Noh particularly, might seem to subtilize action to the point of spiriting it away. In the Noh, action is so purged of its physical accountrements that it assumes the nature of a stance—action happening out of time in the stillness of the soul. What the Noh presents is the flower, the *yugen*, the final bloom of the tree of action—not the bole and the roots and the worms! As a Noh commentator might put it: 'It is the reduction of life of man to a single fulcrum, poised at the point where the now and the hereafter touch and where the problem of the tortured spirit has a single solution...The actual events are faded and distant; only the essence of the experience of living remains'.

Now Sanskrit drama does not go that far, shows more regard for plot though, like the Noh, it is essentially the depiction of emotional states rather than the unfolding of a plot. And though the Noh derives its notion of action from Zazen (or Zen Buddhism) specifically, one can recognize its blood-relationship with the Indian notion. The distinctivenesses are only family differences.

When therefore we place the celebrated Aristotelian dictum—to the effect that drama is an imitation and what it imitates is man in action—by the side of corresponding pronouncements in Bharata, we notice a supereficial resemblance but the hidden differences are deeper and more profound. Aristotle's *Poetics*, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* and Zeami's *Kadensho* may use approximately the same term—'imitation'. But there are always tell-tale modifications. Zeami would add, for instance, that in imitation there should be a tinge of the 'unlike', for if imitation be pressed

too far 'it impinges on reality and ceases to give a lifelikeness'. Which is likely to sound like an incomprehensible paradox to an ear attuned to the Western aesthetics of Imitation.

Similarly in Bharata, though imitation be rendered as a 'mimicking', 'imaging', or 'representation' there is always some small detail, some qualification which puts us wise of the immense submerged difference. The most prominent of these *Nāṭyaśāstra* statements runs: 'Drama is a representation of the state of the three worlds'. The phrase used is *bhāvānukīrtanaṁ* or *avasthānukīrtanaṁ.* It is further clarifid that is not exclusively a representation of man's activities but those of gods and demons as well:

Devānāṁ cāsuṛāṇaṁ ca rājnāmatha Kuṭumbināṁ,
Kṛtānukaraṇaṁ loke nāṭyametat bhaviṣyati.[3]

This is to say 'nāṭya' is not a reflection or a camera-like imitation of man's secular existence. The world it reflects the state of has already been impressed with imagination and peopled with its products! It is nothing short of the state of the three worlds that drama imitates. The term, 'the state of' is itself intriguing. 'Drama', says Bharata, 'becomes instructive to all through the actions and states that it images and through the sentiments arising out of them'. Always, the emphasis is on 'states' or 'sentiments' *(avasthās* or *bhāvas),* the essence, the 'being'—the word *bhāva* itself being derived from *bhū-bhavati* or *bhāvayati.* And why *trailokyāvasthā*—the three worlds being *svargamṛtyupātāla*—the heavens, the domain of death (our world), and the nether world? The point is, an imitation purporting to represent the state of these can hardly be contained in a realistic presentation of our quotidian existence.

If one may interpret this somewhat freely (without fear of inviting ridicule!) the explication may run on the following lines: 'The fiction must take into account our actual world's commerce with the other two. It must be shot through with them; that is to say, the drama should adequately project these all-important linkages and affiances. So that the dramatic structure so evolved may be like a graph of the deepest insights and beliefs of the race, of the community—its *weltanschauung* as it were—in the

same way as the structure of a Greek Tragedy is seen to be the diagrammatic representation of the Greek view of man's destiny. In the Indian case such a structure conforms neither to Western Comedy nor Tragedy but has elements of both. And its characteristic poise and resolution is miles away from the crisis-ridden drama of the Western tradition. What is firmly eschewed is an exclusive pre-occupation with the three-dimensional reality, the world of man's activity in the raw, in favour of a scrutiny, a refined sense of the *state*, an apprehension of its Rasa, its true being in the light of whole, of all the three worlds!'

Then again, there is this most important factor to be allowed for: That the *trailokyāvasthānukaraṇa* has to be rendered through *līlāṅgahārābhinaya* itself makes for a difference. And further, it has to be *mūrtimat* and *sābhilāṣam*. Each such qualification interposes a distance between the common notion of drama and Bharata's highly individualized concept. At any rate, there is little doubt the *anukaraṇa, anukīrtana* or *anukṛti* of Sanskrit dramaturgy is basically a different concept from Aristotelian imitation. It is more closely related to concepts we meet with in Indian treatises on the Shilpashastra where the term acquired a peculiar nuance. There imitation has to do with the twin canons of *sādṛaśya* and *pramāṇa*. We are told, in art, all forms are ideally determined with regard to *Sādṛaśya* and *Pramāṇa*—likeness and ideal proportion. *Sādṛaśya* (or synvisibility, the term Ananda Coomaraswamy uses), usually translated as likeness or imitation, is more accurately described as correspondence of formal and representational elements in art. So that *sādṛaśya* is more properly conceived of not in terms of an analogical similitude of the kind whose stock example in Sanskrit rhetoric has always been: 'A young man is a lion'.

In the Indian concept, the likeness of anything to its artistic representation cannot be the likeness of nature but analogical or exemplary or both. Here again, what is imitated is subtle essence of a thing as we apprehend it with a kind of total apprehension and not only by the senses. *Sādṛaśya* is further qualified by *pramaṇa*, has to be 'moulded' by right proportion and design......so as to give us natural shape and ideal proportion,

all in one. Imitation of the Indian conception is conditioned by properly conceived design, which means design woven out of highly conventionalized forms and symbols as in the case of Sanskrit drama or Japanese Noh—the Noh being actually the most formal and least naturalistic drama in the world.

I have always thought there is much wisdom in that *Nāṭyaśāstra* story of the First Performance, the theme being the defeat of the *daityas* by the gods—given at Indra's Banner Festival—which became a fiasco. The first shot at *Imitation* seems to have caused trouble. In Bharata's witty account: The gods were greatly pleased and began to shower gifts on the performers. The *daityas*, it seems, at first behaved handsomely but when it came to killings and mangling of bodies, could no longer swallow the affront, but got up in rage shoting: 'We shall not tolerate this performance,' and instigated the *vighnas* to break it up... Was it that the *daityas* took the 'imitation' too literally? Or that the inexperienced performers grossly overdid it? In any case, it did seem to be an object lesson how not to take 'imitation'! And, was not Bharata deliberately prefacing this parable to the discussion to guard against a possible misunderstanding of 'imitation' upon the stage? Anyway, he slyly keeps quiet on that question.

Whether Bharata meant it as a warning against a patent misunderstanding or not the little fable does throw light on how to take 'imitation'. Firstly, the *anukaraṇa* being in the form of dance, *abhinaya*, poetry and music a certain distancing from actuality is already interposed and asks for a corresponding response. One would do it wrong by reacting, as the *daityas* did, unappreciative of the aristic distance. Unless the performers themselves bungled it and lapsed into an uncouth mimicking of an actual happening...and enjoyed themselves...at the expense of the poor *daityas!* Secondly, we note that the context in which Bharata first uses the term *anukaraṇa* (through his mouthpiece, Prajāpati) concern the *scope* of drama rather than the technique. The *daityas* when hauled up had roundly charged Brahma with *partiality:* 'The knowledege of the dramatic art introduced by you for the first time at the instance of the gods puts us in an unfavourable light. This is done by you for the sake of the gods.

This ought not to have been done by you who are the progenitor *(prajāpati)* of the world, from whom came alike gods as well as *daityas.*' And Prajāpati has a hard time getting round them by declaring that drama is meant for all! He assures them that drama is the imitation of the state of the three worlds, and not biased towards the gods alone. The emphasis is on the content...on *what* drama imitates. Whereas, in the Aristotelian phrase, 'imitation of an action', the emphasis falls on the technique, the *how* of it.

Once the basic distinction is grasped the consequential details become comprehensible. If drama of the mimetic concept aims at presenting men in action, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* mode aims at *rasotpatti*, the evocation of *Rasa.* The drama has to be an adequate vehicle, a structural matrix in which the *Rasas* can naturally arise and flourish. This is reflected in all its features, for instance, in the classification of the hero-figure. The Aristotelian notion of men better or worse than we are as fit subjects for tragedy and comedy respectively is part of the imitative concept: the doctrine of the 'tragic flaw' rests on a similar foundation. The *Nāṭyaśātra* scheme of classification is based on a radically different set of assumptions and needs. The heroic types have to be such as to serve the central purpose: heroes can be either *dhīrodātta, dhīralalita, dhīraśānta* or *dhīroddhataḥ*. Which implies a concept of man alredy moved out of his native matrix of animality. An initial comment is implied. Life has been searched and man viewed in terms of higher categories measured by a sophisticated standard.

The Aristotelian prescription that the tragic hero be better than ourselves doesn't legislate on the nature of the difference. In the entire Western tradition this distinction is seen to be not necessarily one of moral or spiritual excellence. To the renaissance hero, for instance, we can only ascribe a certain kind of *virtu* as the irreducible requirement, what is in the main a form of vitality, capacity for physical and mental striving, whether for good or evil. The prescription provides merely the basis for the creation of value, not value achieved. Which leaves the field open for a multifarious individuation in character-portrayal. In

the Indian concept, the hero has to be heroic in the normative sense. He is *dhīra* (self-contained), first of all, and further characterized as *udātta* (magnanimous) or *lalita* (vivacious) or *śānta* (poised and calm) or *uddhata* (vehement). These are not human types in the ordinary sense but rather types of perfection possible, for men with different elements in their composition as nature has mixed them. Moreover, the main object is not the individualising of personality but the creation of an artistic whole, a design woven out of various sentiments into a music-like composition. Character in the Western sense is strictly incidental to it.

Similarly, there is basic divergence in the requirements of Plot. To Aristotle, the dramatic poet is primarily a maker of plots; he accords it the central place pronouncing it the soul of Tragedy...and so on. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* emphasis is clearly elsewhere. The Aristotelian notion of a beginning, middle and end leaves the door open to innumerable possibilities of different kinds of actions, men, motives, and events, variously patterned—as the course of Western drama has shown. Whereas in Bharata the plot must necessarily describe a pre-determined arc—and all is mandatory. There are the five formal elements—*Bīja*, *Bindu*, *Patākā* and so on, and there are the *Sandhis*. But what is of special significance, there are the *avasthās* or stages of action. In Bharata's words: 'These are set afoot by those that strive after a result'. The plot must always be structured : *ārambha*, *pryatna*, *prāptisaṁbhava*, *niyataphalaprāpti*, *phalayoga*—beginning, effort, hope-despair, uncertainty-certainty and finally success. That is to say, the plot has to be a paradigm of human effort—striving and enterprise that, after initial foiling, necessarily ends with success; that is mandatory.

One may well ask: why should the plot-line follow only the paradigm of effort leading finally to success? Why not ill-success? Failure? Catastrophe? Why not Death? Why, if not because, only in such a firm scaffolding of plot-pattern could there be full scope for a development of the *Rasas* which is the main aim. Elements of conflict, of tension are indeed present but they are not made the fulcrum of the drama as in the West. The prescribed plot is the natural receptacle for drama's main purpose. Which,

in effect, rules out Western Tragedy, at least in the plot-action-oriented sense. Rather, it takes us beyond the point where action is designed as a sort of therapy of the soul—as it is in Tragedy—and presents instead a poise already reached. Sanskrit drama has splendid tragical scenes but no tragedy as such. Of suffering and graciously endured grief there is hardly any equal to it anywhere. But no tragedy in the strict sense. As someone said, a tragic close to a Sanskrit play would be as curious as a Christian Passion Play only as far as Good Friday, omitting the Resurrection! The Sanskrit play is addressed to a different goal, a different kind of perfection.

To go back a little, we saw that the concept of 'action' in Aristotelian thought is governed by the norm of psychological plausibility and plausibility of situation. As the *Poetics* puts it : 'Whenever such-and-such a personage says or does such-and-such a thing it shall be the probable or necessary result of his character, and whenever such-and-such an incident follows upon such-and-such another it shall do so as the necessary or probable consequence thereof.' Action in a Sanskrit play, too, has a certain psychological and situational plausibility, but it works within a controlled structure. The characters of the hero and heroine, and so on, are already placed in well-defined categories and the situation is such as affords the best scope for the delineation of the precise *Rasa* that is to achieve full force and felicity.

So that, though the mimic theatre's character-circumstance interaction is essential to Sanskrit drama, there is a basic difference. The quality of action isn't specifically addressed to reflecting the actual clash of wills and motives, the tumultuous cross-currents of emotion and action, circumstantial conflict... and violence and death. All this passes through a sieve, as it were, and what we have is a form of quintessential action addressed to the purpose of *Rasa* creation and enjoyment. So that questions like : How was Durvāsā's curse reasonable ? Why was the innocent Śakuntalā's repudiation justified ? Wouldn't a *dhīrodātta* hero (Dushyanta) behave better than he does ? And wouldn't he be inviting a tragic outcome if he didn't ? And thus fore-close a happy resolution ?...strictly speaking, do not arise.

(They would be vital and disturbing problems in a drama set in a tradition of 'action' differently conceived). In the *Nāṭyaśāstra* tradition the resultant dramatic form would be of a radically different order. It has been said that its closest analogue in Western life, thought and art is not so much their classical drama as their classical music—that the structure of a Sanskrit play, the way it develops the theme through elaborate conjuctions, is symphonic. Which comes closest to hitting the mark!

Hence its defining quality, as some perceptive critics like Henry Wells have recognized, can only be adequately stated as a spiritual equilibrium. Its movement is circular rather than progressive. It does not even move from evil to good, from insufficiency to sufficiency. And that is because its true Time is circular and the keynote, *renewal*. Whereas the linear, irreversible process of Time that commits the individual life to its one-and-only-chance is the very heart of the *Tragic* experience. Indian art moves in a more relaxed ambience of Time. The plays end neither in death, as in Tragedy—except for Bhāsa's play *Karṇabhār* —nor in marriage, as in Comedy, but in reunion which is the characteristic close. We think at once of *Śakuntalā*, *Svapnavāsavadattā*, *Mṛcchakaṭika*, *Uttararāmacārita*...and so on. Their true Time is circular, meaning that the psychological dimension in which the characters move and have their being is larger. The world of terrestrial time is bursting at the seams...and here's a world in which a Durvāsā's curse can operate, where the last scene presided over by sage Kashyapa can take place in which Dushyanta could honestly end his *bharatavākya* with 'May the self-existent God, from future transmigrations, save my soul.'

It is hardly possible to consider the distinction this dramatic *genre* has reached without reference to the concept of *Rasa* and the intricate machinery and logistics of its production Sanskrit dramaturgy is busy with. It is, in many ways, the heart of the matter. The *Rasa* theory put forward by Bharata and later elaborated by critics like Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta has acquired a bewildering wealth of comment. The term itself has a wide range of connotations, from the plain alcoholic Soma-juice to the metaphysical *Absolute Brahman* (*raso vai saḥ*). Most

of these however cluster round two poles : (1) *Rasa* meaning 'sentiment' or emotional state with all its human concommitants and proliferations, and (2) *Rasa* meaning the essence of a thing, the 'being' (for which also there is warrant in the word for emotion, *bhava*—from *bhū-bhavati.* The truth lies somewhere between the two; and perhaps nothing said about *Rasa* is authentic that doesn't share some of both these nuances.

What is pertinent here is that the theory is strongly spectator-oriented. *Rasa* refers at once to the totality of elements that compose the 'organic' unity of the artefact and the aesthetic experience aroused in the appreciator. The *Rasa* is tasted by him; the terms used being *rasanā, charvaṇā, āsvādana.* A play is *rasotpatti* and *rasasvādana* both at the same time—thus joining the act of artistic production with the acts of enjoyment. (In Western criticism, it has been observed, there is no such term which indicates both at once—the term 'artistic' having basic reference to source, and the term 'aesthetic' to response). Secondly, the theory lays special emphasis on the distancing of the aesthetic experience from life-emotions with their practical pressures. Which incidentally would seem to discount any form of 'realism' as such. Abhinava's commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* vigorously discusses—in the Sixth Chapter—whether *Rasa* is dependent on *Bhāva* or *Bhāva* on *Rasa*...and in such a manner as to effectively dispose of the Clive Bells and Roger Frys of modern criticism who ascribe to *aesthesis* the status of a separate emotion.

What is still more important is that the *Rasa* experience is always marked by a rare unparallelled serenity. All *Rasas* are tasted in a state of perfect tranquillity...which owes to the withdrawal of the Ego from its practical behests. So much so that a lively debate had raged whether *Śānta Rasa* should not be regarded as the *Mahārasa!* What is involved is no ordinary allaying of emotional tumult, but is rather the core of the aesthetic response—which is clear from the fact that the action-filled *Mahābhārata* is regarded as the finest example of the *Śānta,* as does Ānandavardhana in *Dhvanyāloka.*

The great premise behind all this is the poised state of the soul conceived of as central to all art activity. The consciousness

gains a composure, a repose, a *saṁvidviśrānti*, freed from the grossness of appetite and agitation (*Kāma* and *Krodha*). The imitation of action so conceived, if not wholly foreign to the Aristotelian conception, is certainly not the vivifying factor in the drama of the West as it is in Sanskrit plays. We do these plays wrong to judge them as though it were the same (There is however an important caveat to be entered).

In this context, when we talk of Indian dramaturgy's rejection of 'realism' the careful distinction Bharata makes between *lokadharmī* and *nāṭyadharmī* styles of representation assumes significance. What exactly is the difference? Why is it so elaborately worked out as to suggest a matter of high importance? It is common to regard *Lokadharmī* drama as 'realistic' and *Nāṭyadharmī* as 'conventional'—in the sense, the former imitates natural modes of speech, behaviour, flow of action, while the latter weaves an artistic design using tacitly accepted devices and conventions. The former is 'natural' and the latter 'artificial'—in the manner all art it. A latter reference to the two styles says just this succinctly : *Svabhāvo lokadharmī tu vibhāvo nāṭyameva hi*[4] —with *vibhāva* standing for a deviation or distancing from *svabhāva*. But since both are art (*svabhāvo lokadharmī tu*) might seem to stress psychological plausibility which would bring that style closer to the Western concept.

Another interpretation of *Lokadharmī* and *Nāṭyadharmī* is the distinction between the popular and the elite theatres—between the loose, variegated, folk drama forms and the strictly designed, precept-oriented classical drama. From the viewpoint of technique, the opposition is clearly that between straightforward realism and representation that is necessarily 'symbolical' in some degree. That is central to the discussion which begins by explainning that the *Laukikī* style is :

svabhāvabhāvopagataṁ śuddhaṁ tu vikṛītaṁ tathā,
Lokavārtākriyopetamaṅgalīlāvivarjitaṁ.
Svabhāvābhinayopetaṁ nānāstripuruṣāśrayaṁ...[5]

And that the *Naṭyadharmī* style differs from this, goes beyond tradition or history or what is common and familiar. And that more especially it employs *līlāṅgahārābhinaya* whereas the former

is *aṅgalīlāvivargitam.* The text then goes on to explain the various stage devices and conventions such as the Zonal Division or *Kakṣāvibhāga* which is a very important feature of Eastern drama that reached a very high degree of refinement in the Noh. There is one verse in this context that is especially crucial :

Loke yadabhiyojyaṁca padamatropayujyate,
Mūrtimatsābhilaṣaṁca nāṭyadharmī tu sa smrtā.[6]

Though matter or theme is chosen from what is normally prevalent in the world, the form that is given to it has to be *mūrtimat* and *sābhilaṣaṁ*—has to achieve the shape of concrete corporeal image such as art creates. Further, such an image should be imbued with the artistic purpose implicit in it (Ghosh's translation reads *sābhibhāṣaṁ* in the place of *sābhilāṣaṁ* but this latter seems the more accurate version). In other words, though a certain degree of realism is natural, what distinguishes the *Nāṭyadharmī* style is the treatment which has to be 'symbolical'.

It looks as though the author is at pains to fix the precise quality that separates the high drama of classical tradition from folk forms. What is behind all this anxiety? There probably is a lurking feeling that though the splendid masque-like or ballet-like Sanskrit product is preferred by men of refinement, what pleases the masses of people is something different. That, side by side, there was an equally, or may be, more powerful p.actice that was in full swing among the common people. And that fact had to be recognized. (Is it that Drama is, after all, *Prākṛta*? Has to be close to *Prakṛti*? One wonders). This must give pause for reflection.

Both styles share common roots and are addressed to the evocation of *Rasas,* and so on; but one feels there is more involved. *Lokadharmī* drama would naturally stress the treatment of the common, secular aspects of life. At its widest, such drama might embrace the whole range of theatre that presents man's circumstantial and appetitive life in all its heights and depths...in which case, it would appear that the entire Aristotelian tradition is *Lokadharmī*! Was Bharata then hinting at other possibilities, even anticipating developments like the Western

drama ? Again, was he guarding against the fate that overtakes all elite classical drama wherever it has to stand up to a rival popular theatre ? That's how the Elizabethan masque died, while the crude people's theatre to which a shakespeare belonged had a lusty growth.

In any event, this might well be an instance of Bharata's catholicity and open-mindedness that is evident everywhere. He never makes the mistake of equating the common with the low in quality, by definition. True, the normal expectation is that the *Nāṭyadharmī* stands for the pure, the ideal, and the *Lokadharmī* for the impure and corrupt form. But though the distinction is carefully drawn there never is any suggestion that the *Lokadharmī* style be regarded as inferior or less important. Indeed, an aspect of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* that surprises us is the way the word occurs repeatedly and with various nuances. One constantly lights on statements like these :

Lokasvabhāvaṁ saṁprkṣya narāṇāṁ ca balābalam,
Saṁbhogaṁ caiva yuktiṁca tataḥ kāryaṁ tu nāṭakam.
Tadeva lokabhāṣāṇām prasamīkṣya balābalam,
Kuryānnātakaṁ...Lokasvabhāvasaṁsiddhaḥ, lokayātranugāminah
Anubhāvāḥ vibhāvāśca jneyāstvabhinaye budhaiḥ.[7]

Whatever is *lokasvabhāvānugata* is to be accepted as a norm, it would seem: *lokasvabhāvānukaraṇañca nāṭyasya sattvamīpsitam.*[8] The common man and his experience seem to be recognized as the force that resides at the heart of drama. Even in that highly caste-oriented society, the account Bharata gives of drama's origin declares that the *Panchama Veda* was meant for all categories—particularly those who were denied access to the Four. That is how towards the close, Bharata has a set of verses roundly declaring that what succeeds with the common people is the law for this art, that they be the soul of drama :

Lokasiddhaṁ bhavetsiddhaṁ nāṭyaṁ lokātmakaṁ tathā.
Nānāśīlāḥ prakṛtayaḥ śīle nāṭyaṁ pratiṣṭhitam,
Tasmāllokapramāṇaṁ hi vijneyaṁ nāṭyayoktrbhiḥ.[9]

What all this comes to is the recognition that we have developed drama in a certain form which naturally is sacrosanct for us, being the most intimate expression of our culture, and

of ourselves, but that such a form however is no *absolute.* Within the tradition itself we may be as prescriptive as we like, but there is the danger of over-doing it. Precept-oriented art runs the risk of dying of over-refinement, of anaemia...when it must run back to common life for transfusion of fresh blood. Is Bharata saying, there is danger in too much elitist conceptualization ? That the truth is, art is simpler, more existential, may be ? Anyway it is healthy to recognize, there can be other lines of development, as great. That somewhere, sometime, new forms will arise since *kalohyayaṁ nirvadhirvipula ca pṛthvī.* What is constant is that it is a *Trailokyānukarṇa* as it is in a Shakespeare; as it is in a Kālidāsa. And the only thing common to them is a certain structure of feeling. Above all, what it all means is a deep humility before Art whose roots are embedded in an infinitude capable of multifarious manifestations. As though *ūrdhvamūlamadhaśakhamaśvatthaṁ prāhuravyam* were true of the present context as well!

Finally, then, talking of conceptual structures implicit in the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* can we point to one that is an over-all indigenous feature, and something that qualifies our habitual response to the art of the drama, in fact, to all art as such ? That isn't easy to state. But could we say with some certainty that such a feature is the need to relate our aesthetic perceptions and emotions *vertically* right down to the 'wholeness' of our religious outlook rather than be satisfied with viewing a situation *horizontally* confining attention to some layer of that experience ? So that nothing is considered worthy as art unless it reflects this inner bias and becomes, as it were, illustrative of it in some way.

Eric Auerbach, the classical historian, speaking of the representation of Reality in Western literature (which is the theme of his well-known book, *Mimesis*) pointed out that in the Middle Ages there was such a *vertical* reference which gave rise to what he called the 'figural' style. But that, gradually, the old ceremonial conception of life was supplanted by a historical conception, and the representation of Reality in Western literature became more and more realistic. And, as we should expect, Drama

became more mimetic. Could it be that something similar is happening to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* dramatic concept in today's India? That our theatre is at the cross-roads and is shuffling between Aristotle and Bharata? What is fairly obvious is this : The theatre *is* in labour, and we await a mutation!

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Vāciyatnastu Kartavyo nāṭyasyaiṣā tanusmṛtā,*
   Aṅganepathysattvāni vākyārthaṁ vyañjayanti hi. (XIV. 2)
2. 'We desire a playting (an object of dicersion) which will have excellent qualities both visual and audial'. (I. 11)
3. 'An imitative representation of (the lives of) gods, demons, kings and commoners (householders and family-men) on the stage of the world is what constitutes Drama'. (I, 118)
4. 'What is natural (*svabhāva*) is relevant to Lokadharmī drama; forms deviant from the natural (*vibhāva*) go with Nāṭyadharmī or conventional theatrical presentation'. (XXI. 203)
5. 'If a play presents (its characters') natural behaviour and mental states, both pure and complex or mixed, deals with professions and activities of people, and has simple nature acting with no elaborately structured play of limbs, taking its cue from men and women of various types, (it is called Lokadharmī drama)'. (XIII. 70-1)
6. 'If anything current among the people appears in a play endowed with concrete corporeal imagery and transformed with artistic sophistication it could be considered Nāṭyadharmī or conventional drama. (This is only a somewhat speculative effort at trasslation, the original text itself being obscure and problematical, particularly the term *sābhilāṣam*)'. (XIII. 74)
7. 'A *nāṭaka* should be composed only after careful scrutiny of the nature of the people in the world, the strength and weaknesses of men, their modes of enjoyment and their mental capacities.
   Similarly, it should be composed after cerefully examining the strength and weaknesses of the language of the people.
   The wise should understand that the *vibhāvas* and the

anubhāvas (determinants and consequents of emotional states) that we are concerned with in the art of acting are such as have their origin and warrant in human nature and closely follow the worldly conduct of common people.'

(XIX. 149, 152; VII. 6)

8. 'And since the dramatic consists in the imitation of human nature, an equipoised state of mind (*satta*) is desired for drama and its performance'.
9. 'Whether it succeeds with people is what decides drama's success. Hence people are the very soul of drama.
   The people (*prakṛtayaḥ* : human constitutions) have different dispositions and 'characters' (*śīla*), and it is on 'character' that drama is founded. Hence playwrights and producers should take the people as their authoritative criterion.'

(XXV. 12I, 123)

Krishna Rayan

RASA-DHVANI AND PRESENT-DAY LITERARY THEORY AND CRITICISM

I

Two critical works—both collections of essays—which won the Sahitya Akademi award recently—Ramanlal Joshi's *Vivechanni Prarkiya* (Gujarati) and G.S. Sivarudrappa's *Kavyartha Chintana* (Kannada)—express certain reservations about the relevance and applicability of Indian poetics today. In his essay on 'The Critical Process', Ramanlal Joshi says :

> Gujarati literary criticism today differs from its counterpart of the earlier periods like the era of the Pandits, as it is known, or the era of Gandhiji, in one or two respects. There is greater preference being shown now for an examination of the various constituents of the literary text in the context of questions arising from the techinque or the art itself, rather than in the wider context of life or of society as such. There is again a similar preference exercised in favour of the theories expounded by some of the western creative writers and critics rather than the principles of aesthetic response as laid down in the eastern classical texts. This should provide an occasion for re-examining the question of how far the specifically Indian tradition in poetics can be revived and applied. Literary criticism, at present, seems to have outgrown the wider framework of life as such. To take the traditional critical approach which was based on a constant awareness of the fact that aesthetics is an aspect of philosophy, and to put it alongside of the current literary approaches which concentrate more on aspects of technique and of structure, is to

> be reminded of the almost fundamental difference between the two.[1]

And Sivarudrappa says in the essay on 'Literary Criticism in Indian Poetics':

> Indian Poetics gave itself up to a discussion of such questions as, What is poetry? What are the tools of poetry? What are the uses of poetry? How does poetry affect the *Sahṛdaya*? Discussions of poetics are usually characterized by the listing of *alaṁkāras*, indicating the merits and demerits, classification of style on the basis of word-structure, identification of the dominant as well as other *rasas*, the application and explanation of principles like *rasa*, *dhvani* and *vakrokti*, and the like. But Literary Criticism focusses on completed compositions and mainly studies, against the background of the age, place and the climate of its birth, the cause, stimulus and the influences, and success or failure of the work.[2]

According to Joshi, because criticism today focuses on the formal elements of a literary work, the applicability of the traditional approach which consisted in studying the work in relation to life and society needs to be re-examined. On the other hand, according to Sivarudrappa, Indian poetics concentrated on the formal features of a work and failed to produce a body of criticism studying the work in its tempo ial and social context. They are thus both sceptical about the relevance of Indian poetics today but on the basis of contrary perceptions of its aims and concerns and of the aims and concerns of the criticism today. It is of coure not difficult to see where which of them is right and where wrong.

When Ramanlal Joshi mentions that the traditional approach, unlike the modern one, held that 'aesthetics is an aspect of philosophy', it is difficult to understand, because aesthetics surley is, by definition, a branch of philosophy. If, however, by philosophy, he means spiritual knowledge, then it must be

emphasized that Sanskrit poetics was a resolutely profane enquiry in a predominantly sacred culture. Although concepts from Mīmāṁsā, Vedānta and other disciplines concerned with religion and ethics are occasionally invoked while elucidating features of aesthetic experience, the Rasa-Dhvani theory, like other theories in Sanskrit poetics, regards the literary work solely as a text and studies it independently of any personal, historical, social, spiritual or moral dimensions that may be attributed to it. It retained this secular character despite the formidable prestige and authority of the reigning institutions in a theo-centred morally prescriptive culture. What enabled it to do so was its strong formalistic bias. The primary concern of Sanskrit poetics is the way the internal constituents of a literary work function. It examines, among other things, the forms and methods of figuration *(alaṁkāras)*, varieties of literary discourse (*rītis)*, modes of deviation from standard language *(vakrokti)*, suggestion of meaning *(dhvani)*, and the working of the principle of decorum *(aucitya)*. The Rasa-Dhvani theory, in particular, studies how the objective elements *(vibhāvādi)*—the sensuous representational contents such as situation, character, imagery, language—have a subjective correlative, *i.e.*, the reader's affective response, and how this target state of mind is evoked by its objective equivalents in the inscribed or performed text by what is essentially a process of suggestion. The primary concern of the Rasa-Dhvani project is to investigate the activity of these formal elements in the work.

What the critical theories of the last forty years have in common is that they are all theories of literary meaning. The Rasa-Dhvani theory is likewise essentially a theory of literary meaning. Its notion of meaning as determinate and its isolation of three categories of meaning—stated meaning *(vācyārtha)*, transferred or metaphorical meaning *(lakṣyārtha)*, and suggested meaning *(vyaṅgyātha)*—are at variance with the findings of recent and current studies of meaning. Yet its detailed analysis of the interrelationships of the three categories has made available several significant insights which still have their interest today—such as the process by which one kind of suggested meaning develops matricidally from stated meaning where it has its origin,

i.e., *via* transferred meaning which involves the cancellation of stated meaning. The Rasa-Dhvani theory valorizes the other kind of suggested meaning which issues direct from stated meaning and retains it as its base; it particularly valorizes the version of this latter kind which involves the instant (as distinct from visibly step-by-step) generation of suggested meaning, because this precisely is the process by which *rasa* (the reader's affective response), which is the end-product of the literary process, arises from the perception of its objective suggestors in the text. Thus although metaphoric meaning has a substantive role, essentially the two poles are stated meaning and suggested meaning. The Rasa-Dhvani theory has analysed in exhaustive detail the relationship of the two and tried to determine the degree of their interdependence and their status relative to each other, and has privileged suggested meaning by defining it as literary meaning *per se*.

When suggested meaning is thus equated with literariness, the distinction between the language of statement and the language of suggestion becomes coterminous witn the distinction between literal or standard language and the language of literature. Thus while the features and procedures of deviation are set out thoroughly and in great detail in the Vakrokti theory, its basis is implicit in the concept of *dhvani*. Although present-day theories reject deviationism and posit the monolithic unity of all discourse, the privileging of literary language which had been common to most theories since Russian Formalism continues to be an influential position and has been reasoned out afresh by Murray Krieger and others, so that the distinction between *vācya* and *vyaṅgya* (what is stated and what is suggested) and between *citrakāvya* (statement poetry which is *ipso facto* no poetry), on the one hand, and *guṇībhūtavyaṅgya* and *dhvanikāvya* (grades of suggestive poetry), on the other, represents an important point of contact between the Dhvani poetic and 20th Century theories.

The reader's total emotional response to the text—that is to say, *rasa*—constitutes its meaning; *rasa* is suggested meaning, indeed the highest form of suggested meaning. Unlike reader response as seen by Iser, Barthes, Holland, Bloom and others,

rasa is an affective state of maximum intensity generated in the reader's consciousness by the suggestive action of the objective correlatives of the affect which are contained in the text. Although described here as affective, *rasa* is not blind suffering of an emotion but a state in which the mind is lucidly contemplative and is conscious of the emotion as a distinct entity. This condition is familiar to readers in the Sanskrit literary tradition, and some of its features are corroborated in 19th and early 20th Century Western philosophy, but it is not taken note of in present-day analyses of the activity of reading. In most of these theories, reading is viewed as a cognitive activity and an emotional response is treated as strictly not valid. Besides, the listing of 8 (or 9) *rasas* can make the concept of *rasa* itself highly suspeet. But *rasa* is not a merely visceral condition but a conscious response with as large a component of knowing as of feeling. And as for the limiting of *rasas* to a finite number, it must be pointed out that this is hardly a point of substance, as in the successive treatises the list was being constantly added to, and the concept of *rasa* is not exclusive of variations or nuances of the listed primary responses nor of feelings which are different altogether or novel or unique. What is of significance is that by valorizing the inducing of a certain state in the reader's consciousness as the goal of the literary process, the Rasa-Dhvani theory has installed the reader at the very centre, which is where he is in recent and current theories.

The concept of the reader in Sanskrit poetics is as elitist as in present-day theories : the *sahṛdaya* is a person of innate and/or acquired responsiveness to the text, very much like the 'competent' reader, the 'adept' reader or the 'informed' reader in Structuralist and Post-Structuralist theory. The focus in both systems is on reader's reception or 'production' of meaning rather than on the author's generation of it; on the text itself and the response to it rather than on its genesis in the author's mind. Although concepts like *kārayitrī pratibhā* (the creative imagination) and *kavivyāpāra* (the poet's functioning) do occur in Indian poetics, its interest in 'imagination' and the poet's psyche is marginal.

II

Thus some of the principal insights of Rasa-Dhvani theory are found to coincide with the assumptions and conclusions of contemporary Euro-American literary theories. To regard, therefore, as Ramanlal Joshi does in the passage quoted earlier, 'the theories expounded by some of the western creative writers, and critics' and 'the principles of aesthetic response as laid down in the eastern classical texts' as mutully exclusive systems or as alternatives is to miss, if nothing else, the extent of overlap and corroboration between the Rasa-Dhvani theory and mid-and late 20th Century theories. These affinities invest the Rasa-Dhvani theory with a considerable degree of contemporary relevance.

In the context of the state of the union in literature and literary criticism in India today, the 'relevance', in the operative sense, of a literary theory can only mean suitability as a theoretical base for critical practice in the various Indian languages. It must at once be acknowledged that a 9th-11th Century body of theory, however rich it be in universally valid elements and however modern its orientation, cannot, in its original form, serve as a theoretical framework for present-day criticism. Obviously, it needs to be realigned, revised and added to, with reference to the broad movements in literature and literary theory since the 11th Century, particularly those which have helped in determining the directions in which present-day creative and critical writing have developed. This would be an ambitious exercise in correction and re-adjustment and can only be indicated here by mentioning one or two major deficiencies in the Rasa-Dhvani poetic which need to be rectified.

To specify one such lacuna, although Sanskrit poetics analysed figuration exhaustively and worked out an elaborate theory of metaphor it did not evolve the notion of what has been variously termed symbol, myth, archetype, etc., in modern theory and can be inclusively called 'image'. It is ironical that the Dhvani theory which is a theory of suggestion failed to isolate the prime suggestor, the image. What the Romantic and Symbolist poetics discovered—the image as non-discursive,

autonomous, autotelic, resistant to explication—and what contemporary theory has re-affirmed in different terms—the image as the most concentrated form of the literary signifier, which is possessed of an indestructible phenomenological particularity and is irreducible to a concept and which is, according to one version, polysemous, and according to another, unproductive of meaning with the result that the reader is forced to produce it—must be assimilated into the Dhvani theory to the extent that these formulations can be harmonized with its basics. A second deficiency in the Rasa-Dhvani theory, which is related to the first, is its unawareness—an accident of history, as Ānandavardhana preceded Freud by a millennium—of the unconscious, the source of imagery, the source in fact of art itself. The *rasas* as formulated in the Rasa-Dhvani theory are conventionalized conscious-level states of mind, finite in scope and indeed in number, whereas art experience, as seen in modern psychology, has to do with the unconscious and responses are inexhaustibly differentiated and finely nuanced. On the other hand, in semiotic or Structuralist terms, the responses are generated by the tacit codes and conventions underlying the literary system which are mastered by the reader. If two positions—subliminal origin, and origin in an implicit system within the culture—are irreconcilable, the Rasa-Dhvani theory must incorporate the one which is closest to its own core assumptions. Apart from these two, there are many more insights available from Western theories and post-11th-Century advances in poetics in India as well as from a Sangam period theory in Tamil associated with Tolkappiar. In particular, the theory of suggestion in the West from Edgar Allan Poe and the French Symbolists down to the present day is an obvious source of enrichment. The Rasa-Dhvani theory needs to be restated not only in the light of these but also in the light of change and innovation in literature itself, particularly the shift from statement to suggestion which established Modernism in Western literatures at the turn of the century. Enlarged and modernized on these lines, the Rasa-Dhvani poetic can well serve as a common theoretical base for literary criticism in Indian languages.

But can it really ? Te revert to Ramanlal Joshi and Sivarudrappa—this essay is hardly meant as a rejoinder, but as it happens, the two essays quoted from at the start seem to serve as points of departure for the present discussion—Sivarudrappa complains : 'In the realm of Indian Poetics, there is nothing worth a second look by way of critical approaches or elements of criticism. It is no small matter that such brilliant conepts as *rasa*, *dhvani*, *vakrokti* and *aucitya* blossomed in our study of Poetics. Logically, theories of poetry should lead to Literary Criticism. The evolution of Literary Criticism from Poetics was possible in the west; it did not happen here. And the question is, Why ?'[3] Sivarudrappa's answer, among other things, is that Sanskrit poetics had deficiencies which incapacitated it for generating a body of criticism. Even if this was indeed the case, such deficiencies need not cramp Rasa-Dhvani today as a theoretical framework, because what is being proposed for the role is a new and revised form of it.

It is possible to make out a case against having a theoretical base at all, by defining criticism as a purely empirical activity, as Ramanlal Joshi does in his essay : 'Yet the critic lays before you his own sensibility which is in itself vital; he registers his own intellectual responses. True, in the process, he applies certain abstract principles, but no critic would set out to criticize only in order to apply this or that set of principles. A critic is essentially an empiricist'.[4] But criticism as belletristic confession of personal reactions has become outdated as objective and analytical procedures have gained dominance, so that although the reader's response is the crucial factor, a mere statement of it does not amount to criticism. As for empiricism, never has criticism been so dependent on literary theory for support and substantiation as during the present decade and the last one. This has been the case in America since the Johns Hopkins University conference in 1966, but in Europe the dominance of theory dates back to the rise of Russian Formalism in the twenties. The trend has also arrived in India and has been noticeable for some time in our universities and learned journals and other centres and outlets for criticism.

The capacity of literary theory to provide a base or framework for criticism cannot any longer be questioned. What can be questioned is the capacity of theories to provide these—different theories such as those current today: schools and movements, constantly at war with each other, each in a state of continuous flux and deeply divided against itself. The theorizing in each case has been brilliant, exciting, bracing, and it has served the important purpose of ensuring that the study of the nature of writing and reading is a continuing and lively inquiry. But the presence of a multiplicity of competing theories can have the effect of leaving the average practising critic either drifting bewildered from one to the other or fanatically bound to one of them. What Indian criticism needs is a theoretical system which is single and self-consistent and yet comprehensive and capable of assimilating such significant positions in other theories as are reconcilable with itself. It should besides command wide acceptability through being sufficiently powerful in respect of Indian literatures, both their individual and their common properties. It should also have an operative dimension and be able to provide the working critic with criteria of evaluation, tools of analysis, and other equipment needed for critical operations. The Rasa-Dhvani theory seems to fill the bill in all the respects. I have already shown that the Rasa-Dhvani theory, while retaining its identity, ought to be able to link itself with the theory of suggestion in the Romantic and Symbolist poetics and that several positions in 20th Century literary theory have rough equivalents in the Rasa-Dhvani theory and can be assimilated into it, making it a comprehensive modern poetic. As for acceptability and 'power' as a common critical framework for Indian literatures, this indeed has been the historical role of the Rasa-Dhvani theory. As regional literatures developed, Sanskrit poetics—particularly, the Rasa-Dhvani theory—provided a common theoretical base for criticism in modern Indian languages, with a very few exceptions like Tamil, Urdu, and Sindhi. While this meant, on the one hand, that criticism tended at times to resolve itself into sterile run-of-the-mill spotting of *alaṁkāras* and other superficial features, it ensured, on the other hand, that the great seminal concepts

of Sanskrit poetics, such as *aucitya*, *vakrokti*, and more importantly, *dhvani* and *rasa* were preserved and applied. The reign of Sanskrit poetics in the regional critical traditions was threatened first by the emergence of variant or novel concepts such as *Rīti-Kāl* in Hindi, and then in the 19th and early 20th centuries by the advent of Western criticism. There has, however, been a growing realization since that the differences between the Rasa-Dhvani and mainstream Western models that strike the eye are outweighed by substantive affinities that lie deeper. The situation today is that while Marxism, Structuralism, and Deconstruction are understandably attracting much attention, a contrary trend is an extensive resurgence of interest in the Rasa-Dhvani poetic and in comparative study of Sanskrit and Western theories. The latter concern is prominently reflected in publications, learned seminars, doctoral research, and advanced post-graduate course work. This is not revivalism but the product of a rational perception that a theory which had its origin in the Indian cultural tradition must be uniquely powerful in respect of Indian literary works. Literary theories, unlike theories in the non-human sciences, are culture-specific. Deconstruction, for instance, is an attack on the logocentricity of Western culture; it is an attempt to dismantle Western metaphysics and is proved on Western philosophical texts from Plato to Lévi-Strauss. Its relevance to the Indian tradition or any tradition outside Western culture is open to question. The Rasa-Dhvani theory has grown out of Indian culture and is in fact one of its institutions which has demonstrated its continuity. Whatever be the elements in an Indian literary work which it owes to change and experiment and to the influence of Western models, its core will inescapably be part of the Indian cultural tradition, and no theory outside this tradition can equal the Rasa-Dhvani poetic for power in respect of the work's core.

A literary theory is not specific to any one literature and can claim applicability to several literatures; nevertheless, the adoption of a common theoretical framework for fifteen or more regional literatures can be challenged by those arguing that each regional literature has a distinct identity determined by its long history,

the properties of the language, the specific sub-culture forming its hinterland, and the impact of each writer's contribution. The argument has some merit, but it is equally true that all the regional literatures together have a larger identity established by the national heritage and by shared elements which have resulted from the common forces that acted upon them during their development. And today these literatures are moving closer to each other, and doing so more rapidly than in the past, because of the unprecedented upsurge of translation activity, the growth of multilingualism among writers and readers, the influence of television and other national media, and the labours of the national agencies for the promotion of literature and book production. The forces of interaction and cross-fertilization among regional literatures are stronger today than ever before. This has meant that there is constant comparative evaluation of literary achievement across the boundaries of language and regional culture, so that, for instance, proper comprehension and evaluation of, say, a protest novel in Hindi are possible only by the application of the same, or roughly the same, criteria as for protest fiction in the other literatures. These imperatives have generated an urgent need for a common critical framework.

Before claiming that a theory of suggestion, embodying the Rasa-Dhvani poetic revised, enlarged and modernized, can provide such a framework, it is obviously necessary to test the applicability of the theory to texts in Indian literatures. The testing can, of course, only be done on a sample basis and on translations. I have completed a test of this kind. I took texts at random from the fifteen languages, one from each, and in each case, having read the text, I recorded what seemed to me to be the most worthwhile and important things to be said about it without worrying about any theory and keeping in view only their pertinence and their capacity to enhance one's understanding of the text. I then checked whether the things I had said were related to a suggestion-based approach. At the end of the day I found that they indeed were in the case of each text. As I had worked on translations, the final stage of the test

consisted in checking my observations with the author or the translator, or if neither was available, with a scholar or critic in the language. Admittedly, one text from a whole literature is too small a sample to have significance by itself, but the fact that the approach proved to be meaningful with all the fifteen samples used indicates that a theory of suggestion does have potentialities as a common framework for criticism in our various literatures. In my encounters with the texts it invariably turned out that reconstructing the polysemous output of images, detecting a sub-surface level of narration, spotting the principal emotional motif, or demarcating statement and suggestive writing enabled me to find the core of the work and identify its total meaning.[5] These after all would be among the chief concerns of an expanded and updated Rasa-Dhvani theory. What distinguishes Modernist writing in whichever language it be is its exclusive dependence on the strategies of suggestion, and a modernized Rasa-Dhvani theory would be uniquely competent to assist criticism to analyse and explain these.

APPENDIX

THE MANY FACES OF SIN

Out of the 34 Oriya pomes in Engilsh translation in *Indian Poetry Today* (the January-April 1980 special number of *Indian Literature*), four have either sin as the main theme or as a dominant element. The four poems (Paresh Chandra Raut's 'Snake', Soubhagya Kumar Mishra's 'Sin', and Devdas Chhotray's 'The Long-haired Girl' and 'Sunday'—all translated into English by Jayanta Mahapatra), read with Mahapatra's own English poem 'Sin' which had appeared in *Indian Literature* nine months earlier, form a group which, if it has nothing else in common, is united by an interest in sin which is unique in an age when sin has become an archaic concept.

The second dream in Raut's 'Sanke' is a rewriting of the story of Adam and Eve. The Tempter in the form of a snake kills Eve; the narrator, who one moment dreams of himself as Adam, finds Eve killed, and recognizes the sanke as his foe, himself becme the snake the next moment and sees 'the slow slink

of sin'. ('Slink' is a significant piece of ambiguity here and can mean either his own sneaky reptilian movement or his own rebirth as sin.) What we have here is a new situation: the narrator is Adam is the snake is sin. Paradoxically, by modifying a Christian myth thus, Raut achieves an especially authentic Christian statement of the saturation of the universe in sin until redemption is accomplished. His deployment of Hindu images ('no charm or mantra will ever come to my mind'; 'the unskilled handful of *garuḍas* of my conduct') only contributes to the authenticity of his statement of a distinctively Christian vision of sin as an all-pervasive condition. The other dream—the first—in the poem invests this experience with immediacy and sharpness by presenting the snake as a gun and as a hangman's noose and relating its activities to the actual topography of Cuttack. It is, however, through the Biblical dream that the poem mostly speaks, and it speaks with adequate clarity—with a solid expository framework of its own and ther ight degree of elaboration—so that although the poem's method is mythic, the product achieved is a coherent and fairly explicit enunciation; that is to say, the operation of suggestion is limited to the function of the myth, and the poem as a whole amounts to a comprehensible statement.

In sharp contrast to Raut's is Jayanta Mahapatra's English poem, 'Sin' :

A journey of flaming memories.
Waiting at the wreck
where you had shut out your ecstasy
a madness ago.
Mother, if you are some survivor,
where the lamp you lit
pulled the darknesses of your years
into your haunted veins.
Taday the flowers appear familiar.
Even the sustained kneeling.
Make what you will of the journey:
the skeleton shows the skill
of the priest who led
the dead flesh across the breath.

This is an impenetrable poem. The images of religious ritual, the images of death, the references to madness, the "darknesses' of the mother's life, the title of the poem—what do all these point to? Can it be that her consciousness of sin, her memories of an act of sin, would have ended her life had not religion saved her from death but only at a fearful cost by letting the sense of guilt develop into madness? Now this kind of 'interpretation' is a rash plunge. Also, essentially it stays impaled on a dilemma—if it is wrong, it by definition errs; if it is right, then too it errs, because it is a successful paraphrase of what ought not to be paraphrased. If the poem is powerfully disturbing, it is because it works by carrying suggestion as far as it will go, which is necessarily at the expense of logical comprehensibility—the poem, to use T.S. Eliot's words, communicates before it is understood.

Raut's poem, like the 'death-bringers' chorus and the 'rain of blood' chorus in *Murder in the Cathedral*, projects a universe soaked in sin (with this difference that Raut's instrument is the elaborated single image whilst Eliot's choruses employ the cumulative force of multiple images). Mahapatra's poem, on the other hand, is suffused with a sense of individual sin, an anguished perception of the tragic which comes across the more intensely because the chain of events which the tragic process generated is left unstated. The poem is concerned with that aspect of the Christian conception of sin which regards it as an individual transgression against divine or moral law, as distinct from innate depravity. This aspect has much in common with the Hindu notion of *pāpa*, although there are important fundamental differences which, however, need not be gone into here. The other three poems in the group—those by Mishra and Chhotray—speak of *pāpa*, but they have little interest in its theological implications and are more concerned with the connotations which the term has acquired in present-day popular use.

Chhotray's 'Sunday', despite a few enigmatic indeterminacies in it, is a lyric with some of the directness and spontaneity conventionally associated with the form. In the scale of suggestiveness extending from Raut's poem at one end to Mahapatra's at the other, 'Sunday' is situated closest to Raut's end. The girl

to whom the poem is addressed twice described as 'innocent'; the hands of the narrator's little sister are described as 'sinless'. Innocence and sin are thus developed as contraries through the body of the poem, but the ending demolishes the distinction by describing spontaneous extra-marital sex as 'the world's most innocent sin'. The poem is thus a celebration of the principle of uninhibited guilt-free sexuality in the truest traditions of some primitive and some modern societies. The mode of expression of this belief consists in direct and uncomplicated statement, although the voice is an unmistakably twentieth-century voice with a turn for the subtle and the intriguing, as becomes apparent when the gifts offered ('a drop of blood pure as a flower', 'the unmindful weary sunset from the bazaar', etc.) are compared with those offered in Marlowe's 'The passionate shepherd to his Love'.

A further remove from the pole of statement, yet separated by a greater distance from the opposite pole is Soubhagya Kumar Mishra's 'Sin'. T.S. Eliot's Prufrock says:

> *And should I then presume?*
> *And how should I begin?...*
> *And in short, I was afraid.*

Mishra's poem begins on a similar note:

> *Do I stand in the interior dark*
> *that I wouldn't feel fright or fear?...*
> *just crushing the fruit in my fist*
> *and admitting my hunger*
> *have made me forgetful.*

Prey to 'a hundred indecisions' and 'a hundered visions and revisions', Prufrock is condemned to teetering on the brink of sin for perpetuity. Mishra's narrator, however, is enabled to take the plunge when he is blessed with a vision of 'innumerable stars' who:

> *disclose how*
> *they have slipped away*
> *from that imperious cloud's hold,*
> *the one who cricles the leafless tree.*

Prufrock wonders if he will ever have 'that strength to force the moment to its crisis'. When 'the dangerous moment' arrives for Mishra's narrator, he rejects society's prescription of a sterile morality, and he dares and sins. In its choice of drama as form and in its use of arresting imagery ('the alarm/in fresh tyre-marks on the wet earth' is typical), the poem's mode is early Eliot, and as with most of Eliot's pre-*Waste-Land* poems, the message comes across reasonably sharp and clear : sin can be seen as simply a bold act of mutiny against society's code.

Very short indeed of the degree of obliquity and obscurity represented by Jayanta Mahapatra's poem, yet less discursive and direct than the other poems in the group, Chhotray's 'The Long-Haired Girl' is yet another reading of sin. The personality of the girl is unfolded through a description which largely identifies the pairs of contraries embedded in her :

her breasts like melting light, hands wreathed
in flowers and death, two cool eyes in the rust
of her tears. An actress of unforgiving love!
and impassive blood, the pores of her skin excited
with envy, the glory of her lies bedazzling her youth
over and over again, the lines of her body gleaming gold,
And on her face sin and prayer.

Sin seems to be defined here by being linked with flowers, tears and love, and contrastively through the linking of its opposite, prayer, with death, coolness and impassivity. Interpreted thus, the word is a piece of powerful irony comparable to 'mercenaries' in the title of A. E. Housman's poem, the irony being directed against a system which can regard as reprehensible the act of love which is allied to life and light. With one half of him the narrator is responsive to love as a life-affirming value; his other half is sterile, impotent, inert. Tne girl offers herself to him at a time when this other half is in the ascendant, and her love is not accepted. But was it love or a counterfeit of it ? The question must be faced, because the girl is described as an actress and there is also a reference to 'the glory of her lies', so that the poem would seem to lend itself to an alternative reading which takes sin in its literal sense, linking it with lies,

pretence, death, lack of feeling, impassivity. It is not clear how such an interpretation can be reconciled with the ending, but one does sense the presence of ambiguity in the poem, investing it with a high degree of suggestiveness and carrying it a considerable distance towards the pole represented by Jayanta Mahapatra's poem.

Can it be that sin is one of the obsessive concerns of the Oriya imagination, as it had once been with the Puritan imagination? Thirty-four poems are too small a sample and 4 out of 34 is too low a proportion to support any such hypothesis. What however, can be safely asserted is that the five poems between them succeed in exploring a wide variety of interpretations of the phenomenon of sin—the Christian and the Hindu, the Biblical and the modern, the theological and the romantic, the serious and the ironic; and that in doing so, they try out modes of expression ranging all the way from the discursive-suggestive to the purely suggestive.

NOTES AND REFERENCES :

1. *Indian Literature*, No. 109 (Sept.-Oct., 1985), p. 51
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73
4. *Ibid.*, p. 50
5. My analysis (appearing as the Appendix) of an Oriya text is a fair specimen.

V. K. Chari

RASA AS A GENERAL THEORY OF POETRY

The object of this essay is to give an integrated account of the concept of *rasa*, with all its ramifications, and to assess its value as a general theory of poetry. Although this concept has been known to Western aesthetics for some time, many of its implications still remain obscure or they have only been partially understood. There is a prevalent impression in the West that the aesthetics of the Hindus is but an extension of their mystical speculations, that it is a 'theological aesthetics.' The modern Indian exponents of the subject may themselves have contributed to this impression. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Bharata and Ānandavardhana—fathers of Sanskrit criticism—were no more mystical than Aristotle. Even Abhinavagupta, their commentator, despite his transcendental vocabulary, is at no time seen to lose sight of logic and psychology or leave the objective work behind. It would, in fact, be more true to say that Indian poetics is an extension of Indian logic and Indian theories of meaning. To the formalistic thinking of the Western critic, again a theory of poetry based on the emotions might seem naive and sīmplistic. I hope to show that the *Rasa* Theory is neither so naive nor so mystical, but that is a strenuously argued theory of the nature of poetic discourse and critically a lot more respectable than it is often taken to be.

The idea that poetry expresses emotions is not of course new to Western criticism. But it is only in the Indian tradition, to my knowledge, that we have a consistent and systematic theorizing about poetry in terms of the emotions and an attempt to explain the whole area of poetic semantics as well as aesthetic psychology centrally from the standpoint of the emotions. The emotive theory was not by any means the only theory to be advanced by the classical Sanskrit critics. Sanskrit poetics had its School of Methaphor *(Alaṁkāra)*, which thought of the figurative or deviant mode of expression as the special characteristic

of poetic language, and its School of Style *(rīti)*, which believed that a special arrangement of words, of phonetic and syntactical features, constituted the essence of poetry. Then there was the most influential School of Suggestion *(Dhvani)* led by Ānandavardhana (ninth century), author of the classic *Dhvanyāloka* ('The Light of Suggestion'), and by his commentator Abhinavagupta (tenth century). This school argued that poetic indirection was a special supernumerary activity of words, outside of both the literal and metaphoric functions. While these two critics advanced a novel theory of suggestion they were also responsible for developing Bharata's doctrine of the emotions, which Bharata himself applied mainly to dramatic literature, into a unified theory of poetry. At their hands, the concept of *rasa* or the evocation of emotions became the central criterion of poetic semantics; it even subsumed the principle of suggestion.

A few other preliminary remarks will be necessary for a correct understanding of the scope of this theory and of its basic assumptions. This theory of poetic emotions is a theory only of poetry, in its most inclusive sense, and not a general theory of the arts. For the language of emotions best suits poetry, which is a representational art. No doubt, Bharata in his *Nātyaśāstra* (written probably between second century B.C. and second century A.D.) assigned specific emotional or suggestive values to musical notes (*svaras)* and melodic modes *(jatis*, later called *rāgas*) when they were used in stage presentation. But there is no suggestion that the musical modes by themselves express any particular emotions. It was primarily in the context of poetic criticism, then, that the concept of *rasa* was developed. The *Rasa* Theory, again, implies that there are a number of specific emotions, each with its distinct tone, and not an anonymous poetic emotion nor a host of nameless emotions. Poetic works are not merely emotionally charged in some vague sense like music or nonrepresentational painting, but they treat human emotions; emotions are their representational content. This view may be summed up in language of the commentators on *The Daśarūpaka:* Poetry is composed of words and sentences. And the represented emotion or *rasa* is the meaning of the poetic sentence. The

purport of the poetic sentence consists in the conveying of the basic emotions like love, grief, etc. through words descriptive of the actions and gestures which are invariably associated with those emotions.[1]

Although the term *rasa* has come to mean aesthetic delight in general, in the poetic context it denotes : the art-emotion or the distinct emotional flavour or mood the poem communicates. In this sense we speak of the nine *rasas* of poetry or the nine varieties of aesthetic moods. The emotions or psychic states which the poem treats are designated as *bhāvas*. These emotions are many, some primary and others ancillary, and a whole number of them could enter into the emotional complex of the poem in varying combinations. But it is believed that the resultant flavour would only be one. As to the nature of the distinction between life-emotions and their corresponding moods in poetry, the criteria sugested include the following: (i) the fact of poetry being a verbal representation, which confers upon the represented situation a different kind of reality from the ordinary (for verbal cognition being purely mental is already one remove from the direct perception of an object), (ii) the fictionality implied by the poetic or dramatic convention *(nāṭyadharmī)*, and (iii) the the generalizing power of the poetic statement which frees the expression from the particularities of time, place, and person; the term is also used to refer to the corresponding tone of feeling experienced by the reader. It is assumed that the *rasa* apprehended by the reader is the *rasa* manifested by the poem.

II

The doctrine of *rasa* as originally formulated by Bharata in the sixth and seventh chapters of his *Nāṭyaśāstra* rests on the following assumptions: (1) Emotions are manifested in poetry, as in the life, by a combination of situational factors. (2) There are a specific number of emotions. (3) Some of them are permanent, irreducible mental states while others are fugitive and dependent. But the permanent ones alone can be developed into aesthetic moods or *rasas*. (4) A poetic composition is an organization of various feeling tones but it invariably subordinates the weaker tones to a dominant impression. (5) Feeling

tones are brougnt together in a poem, not indiscriminately, but according to a logic of congruity and properiety.

In his farmous *rasa sūtra* (formula) Bharata explains how emotions are expressed in poetry:

> Emotions in poetry come to be expressed through the conjunction of their causes and symptoms, and other feelings which accompany the emotions.—*Nāṭyaśāstra*, gloss on VI, 31.

Here Bharata stipulates three necessary conditions which must be present together for an emotion to become manifested: (i) that which generates the emotion. called *vibhāva*, which includes (a) the object to which the emotion is directed, i.e., the intentional object *(ālambana vibhāva)*, e.g., Juliet; (b) the causes and circumstances which excite the emotion *(uddīpana vibhāva)*, e. g., youth, privacy, moonlight; (ii) the overt expressions (actions and gestures) which exhibit the emotion, called *anubhāva*, e.g., tears, laughter, etc.; (iii) other ancillary feelings such as depression, elevation, agitation, which normally accompany that emotion.

Bharata lists as many as forty-nine emotional states or *bhāvas*, of which eight are primary or durable states *(sthāyins)*, with their corresponding *rasas* or aesthetic moodes, thirty-three transitory states *(vyabhicārins)*, and eight involuntary expressions like tears, horripulation, trembling, etc., which are also thought to be mental states although they appear as physical conditions. The eight basic emotions are: Erotic Love, Comic Laughter, Grief, Fuıy, Heroic Energy, Fear, Revulsion or Disgust, and Wonder. Bharata's list of eight basic emotions was subjected to centuries of controversy and other emotions too were added to the list. But, finally, the number was fixed at nine, with Subsidence or Serenity added as the ninth emotion.[2] The transitory states like Shame, Impatience, Agitation, Indolence are too numerous to be listed here. In some cases the distinctions between them seem unnecessary and subtilized. However, Bharata's fundamental distinction between the permanent and transitory states must be accepted as a valid distinction and his most original contribution to the emotive theory.

The permanent or durable emotion *(sthāyin)* is so called because it is an irreducible psychic stereotype which, although it attracts a variety of other mental conditions and is fed by them, persists unchanged, giving its own distinct stamp to them. To quote from the texts: 'The emotion which is not swallowed up by other emotions whether friendly with it or unfriendly, which quickly dissolves the others into its own condition like the salt-sea, which endures continuously in the mind, and which, combining with its objects and situations, attains to its fullest expression as *rasa*—that is the durable emotion'.[3] The durable emotions alone are capable of being developed into aesthetic moods. The transitory states are those that accompany the durable state, emerging from it and being again submerged in it, and that cannot endure for any length of time without attaching themselves to one of the durable states. Feelings like agitation, depression and joy or mental exultation have no independent existence and cannot arouse any particular mood independently. They are common to more than one state of mind. Thus the feeling of agitation can appear in love, laughter, anger, revulsion, or wonder. As such it cannot find a resting point in its own nature or establish an independent context for itself. It can only be explained by reference to one of the permanent emotions. For example, when it is said that someone is agitated the question is at once asked 'why is he agitated?' But when it is said that Romeo loves Juliet no questions are asked. Thus the transitory feelings can exist only as accessories to one of the prime emotions, serving the purpose of intensification or contrast. Of course all mental states are volatile and pass away like bubbles even as they come into being. So the only way of stabilizing a prime emotion in poetry is to exhibit it again and again through its attendant conditions and accessories. Thus when a prime emotion is nourished as a principal theme through a whole composition, long or short but long enough to display character and situational context, it becomes a dominant or presiding emotion—a *rasa*.

However, the basic or prime emotion seldom appears in its severest purity of form, but assimilates other major or minor

emotions with which it has organic affinities. Even a major emotion can unite with another major emotion, but only as its subsidiary. Thus the erotic feeling, although it can be conceived to occur in its purity at least for a moment, soon gets mixed up with the feelings of wonder, energy, and even grief, as in love-in-separation. Therefore, a poem, Bharata states, is not an essay in a single emotion *(na hyekarasajam kāvyam)*; it is an orchestration of a variety of major and minor emotional tones which, by being properly subordinated to the dominant mood produce a unified impression. That mood, which so dominates the poem alone deserves to be called the *sthāyin* or enduring tone of the poem. The *sthāyin* itself becomes the *rasa*, the aesthetic mood, when it is nourished by an interaction of varied feeling tones (*Nāṭyaśāstra*, VII, 119-23).

Any given emotion, again, does not go with all other emotions in a promiscuous way, but follows a certain logic, a code of behaviour, not imposed by extraneous factors, but intrinsic to its nature. It can sometimes consort with other emotions which are discordant to its own nature, but only under certain conditions. That is, if two contrary emotions are brought together in a single composition they must either appear in different substrata, e.g., heroism in the protagonist goes well with terror in the antagonist, or if they should appear in the same substratum one of them should be subordinated to the other, the subordlinate emotion serving to reinforce the dominant emotion. Take, for example, Othello's expression of love, pity, and anger in the murder scene, where at least momentarily love and pity are subordinated to anger, although the dominant emotion of the play as a whole is tragic pathos, to which all other emotions act as accessories. Sometimes the opposition between two emotions is removed by interposing between them a third emotion which is friendly to both. Thus wonder can mediate between serenity and erotic love, or heroism between erotic love and disgust. Where two unfriendly emotions are presented in succession they govern alternately till one of them will prevail. The nature of our mental apprehension is such that the quality of one moment is lost in the contemplation of a succeeding moment. So it is not possible

for a variety of impressions to subsist simultaneously in a single moment of apprehension. Therefore the concept of *rasa* requires that there be a single dominant emotion. It rules out the possibility of a 'cocktail' of emotions in which the mixture produces a new complex relish.[4]

A surprisingly close parallel in Western criticism to this theory of emotional unity can be seen in the work of the eighteenth century Scottish-critic Kames.[5] Kames distinguishes between 'concordant emotions,' which mix intimately, and 'discordant emotions' which refuse incorporation or mixture. Two emotions are said to be similar when they produce the same tone of mind. Kames is most emphatic in stating that the mind 'cannot fundamentally take on opposite tones'. Dissimilar emotions may succeed each other with rapidity, but they cannot exist simultaneously. Opposite emotions arising from connected causes and directed on the same object, like love to a mistress and resentment for her infidelity, do not admit of any sort of union. So they can only govern alternately till one of them obtains the ascendance. If the two emotions are unequal in force the stronger will extinguish the weaker after a conflict. Dissimilar emotions proceeding from causes that are unconnected also cannot be felt except in succession, e.g., good and bad news arriving at the same time: the brith of a son and the loss of your house by fire. In every case, Kames declares, regard must be shown, in treating the emotions, to their congruity and propriety. Kames remarks on the very skillful manner in which the opposite passions of love and jealousy are reconciled by Shakespeare in the murder scene of *Othello*. Kames, does not, however, work out a detailed typology of emotions in the manner of Bharata, nor does he distinguish between the permanent and transitory states. Some of the emotions mentioned by him are also not clearly defined psychological states. Thus honour, hope, and grandeur or sublimity cannot be regarded as independent mental states, or categories. For instance, the case for sublimity being a distinct emotional tone is not made out, for the sublime can be of the heroic, the tragic, the wonderful, or the serene type. Some of Kames's categories, like despair and dejection, also overlap.

Such a theory of poetic unity will have important consequences for modern ideas of irony, synaesthesis, and tragicomedy. The prevalent belief with us today seems to be that emotive tones can be combined indiscriminately, and that such a combination is valuable for its inclusiveness. Richards defines Synaesthesis as a state of unmitigated tension between totally opposed impulses, which refuse either suppression or sublimation.[6] The *Rasa* Theory no doubt provides for ample variety and complexity in the organization of feelings within a poem. It even makes it possible for heterogeneous impulses to be incorporated within a single poem according to certain principles of decorum. But what is most emphatically denies is that it is possible to unite in any real sense totally contradictory feeling tones and that even if they could be juxtaposed they remain in a state of continued tension without resolving themselves into a dominant impression. Often, no doubt, it can be seen that even in the supposed cases of irony there is an implicit conformity to the decorum of the emotions outlined above. For instance, Tragedy, for Richards, provides the ideal model of an inclusive structure, which in effect is an ironic structure because of its attraction of the opposite impulses of Pity and Terror. But Pity and Terror are not opposite impulses in terms of our doctrine of emotions, but Pity and Levity or Derisive Laughter are. Richards's reason for considering them as opposites is that 'Pity is the impulse to approach, and Terror the impulse to retreat' (p. 193). Richards is of course concerned with the structure of the reader's response. Even then one must ask whether it is natural for the reader to feel attraction and repulsion for the same person of the drama either simultaneously or successively. It would however be perfectly natural for him to feel pity for Othello and repulsion for Iago. This being the case, no 'reconciliation of opposites' is involved in Tragedy because, in the first place, there has been no direct confrontation between them. Again, the 'opposites' listed in Coleridge's famous definition of Imagination as 'the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities'—novelty and familiarity, emotion and order, judgment and feeling, etc. are no opposites at all within the meaning of our theory of

poetic unity or of the term Irony as defined by Richards. Moreover, it is doubtful whether Coleridge himself would have cared for poetry written according to the 'ironic' prescription. For in the same sentence he speaks of 'unity of effect', and of 'modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling'—a lesson which his modern interpreters seem to have ignored. No Romantic would have liked to combine levity and seriousness, for instance. Witness Coleridge's own discomfiture with the comic scenes in Shakespeare's tragedies. Whatever be the merits of Richards's theory it seems paradoxical that he should use a Romantic concept to berate Romantic poetry, as when he says that Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' is not itself a good instance of imaginative poetry (p. 199, n.). Equally ironical is his rejection of Greek Tragedy as 'pseudo-tragedy' (p. 194). At any rate, the *Rasa* Theory argues that aesthetic poise results, not from an unresolved tension of feeling tones, but from their resolution into a single tone. Sometimes a work such as Eliot's 'Prufrock' or Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* may present an unresolved or unresolvable conflict as its theme, but the resultant tone of the whole cannot but be resolved into unity, into the tone of melancholy or restrained plaintiveness in the case of Eliot's poem and of comic absurdity in the case of Beckett's play. No work may thus remain inconclusive in terms of its tone, however intransigent its theme may be. The *Rasa* Theory also sees no harm in the intense cultivation of a single channel of interest as in Greek Tragedy or the Romantic lyric (e.g., Poe). But, of course, even a relatively simple organization will naturally present the whole 'complex' of the emotion, its rhythms and tensions, and it will incorporate a variety of other tones congruent with it. Again, intensity of meaning in poetry is not judged always by the number of images and feelings brought together, or by its 'secondary and tertiary co-implications', as Richards argues,[7] but equally by the luminosity of a single evocative sense or image.

Most cases of irony, then, are not ironical in the sense that they reconcile opposite tones. They may include contradictory elements, although not without regard to unity of effect. The Greek as well as Eilzabethan tragedies conform to this aim. A

play like *Romeo and Juliet*, as Robert Penn Warren argues, may be free from 'purity of effect' (the ironist's bugbear) because of its inclusion of various strands of interest.[8] But it most certainly maintains 'unity of effect' in spite of the wit and realism of some of its scenes, because the emotions are managed exactly right. For instance, the bawdy jests of Mercutio happen outside the wall of Juliet's garden, and not within the garden itself, and the lovers themselves have no share in them, so that the balcony scene itself is pure romance and pure poetry. Warren, however argues that even this scene escapes the condition of pure poetry because Juliet, who distrusts 'pure' poems, deliberately, as it were, mars the purity of the moment by a rigorous, logical metaphor—the metaphor of the 'inconstant moon'. 'She injects the impurity of an intellectual style into the lover's pure poem'. Warren is no doubt right in attacking the king of facile, sentimental poetry that does not 'prove' itself, that does not, in other words, firmly establish the logic of its emotions. However, the supposed opposition between the 'intellectual style' and 'pure poem' does not exist. For the intellectual quality of the metaphor in question mixes well with the tone of the lovers' dialogue. A good deal of witty intellection or ratiocination enters into certain types of emotive discourse, and it is especially appropriate to amorous as well as devotional casuistry, as borne out by practice of the Metaphysical poets and of the Sanskrit poets themselves. The 'union of thought and feeling' (Eliot's phrase) is not, hence, an ironic formula. A poem, we have admitted, is a complex of various tones and sub-tones; but this does not justify 'installing Mercutio in the shrubbery', that is, the introduction of irrelevant or destructive associations, if this is what Warren means by ironic or impure poetry. In the final analysis, though, Warren does seem to concede the case for 'unity of effect,' as when he describes the poem as 'a dramatic structure, a movement through action toward rest, through complication toward simplicity of effect'. It is precisely this rest, born of ultimate resolution, of which the *rasa* theorist is speaking.

The belief that the tragic and the comic can be intermixed, not as in the Elizabethan Double Plots, but in a way that there

is a complete interpenetration and balance of the two elements, underlies the modern conception of Tragicomedy (also called the 'Dark' or 'Black' Comedy). While this is a widely held belief it is not clearly demonstrated by the actual practice of the playwrights. Even in the tragicomedies of Sean O'Casey, a staunch adovcate of this genre, the purity of their final tragic impression remains unaffected by the mixture of wit and laughter (e.g., *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Plough and the Stars*). The case of the Absurd Drama, too, does not show conclusively that tragedy and comedy can be so blended as to produce a unique single emotion, a 'splitmood' that is at once tragic and comic. The situation of complete stalemate treated in *Waiting for Godot*, characterized by its author as a tragicomedy, may be tragic in its metaphysical significance, but the tone of its treatment is throughout comic because the characters themselves appear to take their plight in that light. Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, is however, different: there the situation is at first funny, and then it becomes no longer funny; the horror of the human situation rises to the surface.

III

As an account of the poetic emotions the *Rasa* Theory seems thus to procced on a sound psychology. But still there are objections from the point of view of the objective critic which must be answered before *Rasa* can be established as a valid critical theory. Of course Indian poetics in general, even like its classical counterpart in the West, was predominantly an empirical, rhetorical tradition, and therefore it avoided many of the heresies and pitfalls associated with Romantic subjectivism. Yet objection will be taken to the whole matter of emotive semantics on which the aesthetics of *Rasa* is based. The language of emotions and all expressionistic doctrines stemming mainly from Romantic philosophy have been under attack in recent years especially from the followers of Wittgenstein. And people as diverse as Susanne Langer, Clive Bell, T. S. Eliot, Middleton Murry, Yvor Winters, Northrop Frye, and F. R. Leavis have all been found to be tainted in some degree by the sin of expressionism.[9] The expressionistic doctrine corresponded to the earlier 'picture-theory' of language propounded by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* and rejected

by him later in *Philosophical Investigations* in favour of his theory of 'language-games'. The whole problem concerning the language of poetic emotions centres on the question : can emotional qualities be tested or specified as they are normally taken to reside in the subjective experience of the writer or the reader? And the answer to the question hinges upon our being able to describe the connection between the work of art and feeling in such a way that one can locate the feeling in the work of art itself and, in a sense, make it testable.[10] The approach in the light of Wittgenstein's logic seeks to avoid the dangers of both expressionist and affective theories by locating the feelings squarely in the work of art itself, instead of imputing them to any actual person, artist, or observer. It does not evaluate the work either by inquiring whether it has faithfully expressed the author's alleged feelings, or by examining its effects upon the minds of the audience. The feelings we find in a poem or play are objective qualities present in the work. They are not the feelings of anybody in particular; they are just feelings defined by their objects and situational contexts. The language of feelings is not, then, a private language; it is more a system of symbols, a language-game which is understood by those who have learnt its conventions and usages.

This objective emphasis is quite congenial to the Indian theorist. The *Rasa* Theory itself deals with the emotions in an entirely objective manner. The object of representing the various emotions in terms of their attendant conditions makes the poetic situation very much a public situation. The Sanskrit critics are careful to point out that the *rasas* treated in poetry are neither the projections of the reader's own mental states nor the private feelings of the poet, but are the objective situations abiding in the poem *(kāvyagata)*. The sorrow presented in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not to be taken as the personal sorrow of the poet, but sorrow itself in its generalized form and identified by its criteria.[11] It is further stated that the possibility of the poetic emotions being apprehended is dependent on the power of the verbal representation.[12] It would therefore be wrong to bring the charge of subjectivism or naive emotionalism against the

Rasa Theory.

But, as Harold Osborne asks pertinently, can emotional qualities like anger, sorrow, fear, etc., which are only exprienced by sentient beings, be properly attributed to works of art ?[13] What do we mean when we say that feelings are properties of the work itself or that they may be predicated of the work directly ? The Sanskrit critics too ask this question, and their answer is precisely the one suggested by Osborne: only in a secondary or metaphorical sense can we speak of the work as being the locus of *rasa*, on the strength of the maxim that the quality of the effect is extended to the cause *(kāraṇe kāryopacārāt)*. As the commentators on the *Daśarūpaka* explain: 'Although *rasa* is the relish enjoyed by the reader *(sāmājika)* it is also the relishable quality manifested by the work. Hence the work too may be spoken of as possessing *rasa (rasavat)* in the way that one says "Clarified butter is longevity itself" because it is conducive to that state. A relishable object becomes relish itself, just as it is said of Brahman "Brahman is relish indeed" ' (pp. 167–68). Here of course *rasa* is understood in its general sense as aesthetic relish. A work is called tragic or comic because it is an object of emotion to the reader. But apart from this, the object of representation in a work, the poet himself or a character, is also represented as having an emotion, or he may be shown as being an object of emotion to the people in the story or to the poet.

The objectivist has no difficulty in admitting that poetry may express emotion through its objects and situations. However, for him it must do so without its having to arouse that emotion in the reader, because there is no a way of ascertaining that the emotion aroused in the reader is the same as that expressed by the work. A critic poses the problem thus: 'Meanings and ideas are of course "objectively" present in the work; they can, for instance, be adequately and most often unambiguously specified. But since there can be no equally sensitive control of emotional response, we are here in the realm of the subjective.'[14] This difficulty is fully appreciated by the *rasa* theorist. Hence Bharata, and following him Ānandavardhana, set up an elaborate logic of the emotions and a body of criteria for situation-app raisal

called *rasaucitya*, based on public norms and standards (*Lokadharmī* and *nātyadharmī*). It must not be forgotten that what the Sanskrit critics are talking about are not the elusive inner happenings of the Cartesian theory, but 'meanings' of emotive situations and behaviour as they enter into human discourse. Emotions in poetry are as objective and public as 'meanings and ideas' are and can be specified as adequately as the others are. If this is so, then, it would seem to follow that in order to recognize emotions in poetry it is not necessary to have any emotions oneself. As another critic argues: 'One recognizes feelings without oneself having those feelings...We can recognize the presentation of grief without being grief-stricken ourselves'.[15] Understanding the language of feelings is like understanding the meaning of a statement; it asks no more than that we learn to recognize the signs by which feelings are known.

But such a conclusion seems to strike at the very root or the conception of *rasa* as aesthetic relish. For, concerned though they are about the essential objectivity of the poetic emotions, the Sanskrit critics do not seek to banish the affections altogether from the poetic experience. Nor do they entirely dispense with mental concepts. On the other hand, they insist that emotions are inner psychic states, but known by their criteria. Bharata, whose approach to aesthetics was more practical then philosophical, naively assumed that the emotions expressed in poetry are the emotions felt by the poet and shared by the audience. And speaking of mimetic action he says that one acts with one's mind, for how can sorrow be convincingly portrayed even through gesture by someone who has never experienced sorrow (*Nāṭyaśāstra*, gloss on VII, 93). Abhinavagupta asserts that the spectator is able to recognize the emotive situation through the direct knowledge of his own emotions as much as by observing the behaviour of others.[16] Śaṅkuka, an early commentator of Bharata, had stated that knowledge of the emotions is made possible only by their objects and expressions, which are their logical signs. The emotions, he maintained, are inferred from their signs, and poetic representation is only of these external signs, not of the intra-psychic states

themselves. From this Śaṅkuka concluded that emotions could be imitated in theatrical representation through their objetive signs. Abhinavagupta argued that such an imitation would be impossible because the aggregate of emotional conditions and signs, while they serve to manifest the emotions, are not identical with the emotions themselves and hence a reproduction of emotive behaviour cannot be called a reproduction of the emotion. Aesthetic emotions, he asserted, can be known only through an identical reaction *(anuvyavasāya)* in one's own mind. It is true that objective signs must be recognized by the spectator, but then the spectator does not merely infer the emotion as being present in others, in which case he cannot feel any sympathetic vibration of the heart *(hṛdayasaṁvāda)*, which is essential to aesthetic experience. Therefore, Abhinavagupta says that in the final analysis it is one's own mental states that one perceives, the objective situation presented in the work simply serving to awaken the latent impressions or dispositions *(saṁskāras)*. When one reads a poem, after one has grasped the verbal meaning that Umā or Hara said so, there appears a direct perception of a mental order in which the meanings of the poem are lived as intimate personal experiences. The apprehension of poetic emotions, Abhinavagupta insists, is a form of cognition, no doubt, because that which is not cognized cannot be affirmed or discoursed about. And there is also nothing called enjoyment which is different from perception or knowledge. Yet it is not a neutral semantic perception but perception which consists of relishing (Gnoli, pp. 54–56)

But this position of Abhinavagupta seems like a regression to the private language argument which the language philosophers are so worried about. Both Śaṅkuka and Abhinavagupta agree that emotions are mental entities which are not identical with their natural expressions or with their verbal representations. Thus they both assume that they are logically and epistemologically prior to their outward manifestations, while at the same time they admit that they can be known to others only through their external signs. The ambiguity of this position seems to bear a close resemblance to that of Wittgenstein who, in his

anxiety to avoid the extremes of the Cartesian and behaviourist positions, was compelled to admit that feelings and sensations exist as non-behavioural and non-dispositional mental states, but that they cannot be named and investigated independently of the circumstances which produce them and the behaviour by which they are naturally expressed. What Wittgenstein denied was not the internality of sensations, but their incommunicability and unteachability. Inner experiences may well and do exist; but what enters our language is what is naturally expressed by behaviour. Wittgenstein grants that pain, for instance, is more private than pain-behaviour; but inasmuch as it is private it plays no part in the language-game. But does this mean that pain, this private accompaniment of pain-behaviour 'drops out of consideration as irrelevant' and that no reference be made to it? At least some of his exponents believe that Wittgenstein did not mean to abolish this inner reference.[17] But whether he did so or not the problem remains for the literary critic: if poetry, as Wimsatt puts it, 'is a way of fixing emotions',[18] in other words, of presenting the logic of the emotions or the structure of the emotive situation according to Bharata's formula, then, would not all reference to its affective quality 'drop out of consideration as irrelevant?'

The Sanskrit critics, including Bharata, did not want to admit this because of their concern for setting up the aesthetic object as a source not so much of knowledge as of delight. It is not enough that the emotive meanings are understood in the way that statements are understood; they must also be found delectable. Otherwise there would be little incentive to contemplate a work of art, much less to seek a repetition of that experience. Abhinavagupta is quite emphatic in stating that poetic apprehension, whether in the poet or in the reader, does not result from the ordinary modes of knowledge like inference and verbal cognition, for these modes do not produce the repeated contemplation of an object, which is the very life of the aesthetic attitude. Poetic apprehension is not inferential knowledge because once an inference is made another identical act concerning the same object cannot be initiated in the absence

of the desire to infer. The same holds for verbal cognition. Once a statement has been understood there is no reason why you should want to go through it again. Thus the *Rasa* Theory would be opposed to the view which argues that poetry is a mode of knowledge and that valid cognitive knowledge rather than emotional thrills is the proper aim and mode of poetry.[19] It is this logic that leads Abhinavagupta to conclude that *rasa* experience is, in the ultimate analysis, something private. But, paradoxically, he as well as the critics that followed him saw no conflict in maintaining that poetic emotions are at once the property of the poet and of his public, inter-subjectively, that is, and that they can arise only from the public context of the poem. The locus of *rasa* is at once the poet, the character, and the spectator.[20] The assumption of such an affinity of nature is vital to any conception of emotive aesthetics. For it seems absurd to say that feelings exist but that they cannot be shared as feelings or that literary works can be effective in specific ways but that they need not produce any effects in the minds of readers. For one thing, such a claim would fly in the face of overwhelming public testimony. As Abhinavagupta points out: 'The audience's perception of the theatrical representation cannot be said to be devoid of all emotion' (Gnoli, p. 37). Moreover, when pain-behaviour in the actor can be identified by its criteria there seems to be no reason why the sympathetic reaction of the audience too cannot be so identified. This argument does not perhaps set the initial question, namely, the relevance of affective reference, at rest. However, it can be clamied for Abhinavagupta that, in spite of his preoccupation with the psychology of aesthetic response, he does not make critical judgement wholly a matter of the reader having some private thrills; the public criteria are never lost sight of. So much so that the objectivity of the work itself as a verbal construct and of all discourse in connection with it is fully guaranteed.

IV

Implicit in our theory of poetic emotions are two other ideas which require elaboration. One is that there is no necessary or constant relation between emotions and their natural expressions,

or between emotions and their objects and circumstances. That is, even if the causes are present the emotion and its natural expression need not follow. Neither can we infer from the natural expression to the emotion. For example, a girl who is in tears could be peeling onions or grieved by the death of her lover. Abhinavagupta states the case thus: The emotive causes and symptoms are in no fixed relation to the *sthāyins* (basic emotions) singly; but when the totality of conditions is given there is no inconstancy. Thus where the death of a dear one is the circumstance, weeping, tears, etc. are the behavioural expressions it cannot be anything but grief (Gnoli, p. 77). Hence Bharata's *rasa* formula stipulates that the entire context should be present for the emotion to be manifested. Again, the Sanskrit critics maintain that between the emotion and its verbal expression too there is no logical or invariable connection. Any given emotion can be expressed in a number of linguistic forms. Therefore one cannot say that the '*King Lear* emotion' demanded this form of expression and this alone, or, in more general terms, that the tragic emotion be treated in a florid metaphorical style or that it should be expressed in unrhymed rather than in rhymed verse.

On these two points, again, the Sanskrit critics are in agreement with the views of Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein too maintained that between pain and pain-behaviour, and again between pain-behavior and pain-vocabulary there is no organic or necessary connection. And this view follows logically from his position that words are not pictures of reality, internal or external, and that they have only a contingent connection with the things they stand for. Bhartṛhari, the most authoritative language philosopher of ancient India, also takes this position: 'Words are only signs; they can designate objects but cannot express their essential nature.' A thing as such is beyond all verbal usage; what figures in the mind is the meaning of words, not outside reality. The meaning of a word, Bhartṛhari maintains, is entirely a matter of its use conditioned by convention *(saṁketa)*, context *(prakaraṇa)*, and the way the speaker has cognized a certain thing and wants to present it. Further, grammatical forms and sentences have no fixed character, but change according to the use

made of them. The grammatical object, for instance, can be transformed into an agent in a way that concrete things cannot be supposed to be. A statement such as 'The sun has set' can mean a number of things according to variations in the context. Linguistic forms not only undergo changes, but they can also be substituted.[21] Whatever the philosophical conclusions, these and other views on language, notably those of the men of the exegetical science called the Mīmāṁsakas, had important consequences for the approach of the Sanskrit critics to the problem of style and language in poetry.

Following the language philosophers the literary critics too entertained no illusions about language being the incarnation of thought. On the other hand, they declared that linguistic forms are *anitya* (contingent), *aniyata* (indeterminate), and *ananta* (infinite). In terms of the emotive theory they denied that there is a specifically emotive use of language as against its referential function. Emotive meaning cannot be regarded as a specific function of words, in that any words can convey that meaning. Although, undeniably, some words, because of their history, do acquire a crust of associated meanings, it is not always the case that words used in an emotive context have 'acquired' connotations of feeling. Emotive meaning can be conveyed by the referential function of words equally effectively. In short, what makes meaning emotive is an emotive context. When the conditions for an emotional attitude are present the words presenting those conditions naturally deliver a 'charged' meaning. It would therefore be a mistake to think that there is a specialized vocabulary or specialized language function that goes with poetry.[22] The *rasa* theorists do not of course neglect the study of the linguistic elements like metaphor, diction, and style. They show through elaborate analysis of poetic specimens how the phonological, grammatical, and lexical items are factors in emotional evocation — cases, terminations, number, relation. affixes, compound constructions, even single letters, sound qualities, and sound collocations. But they also show that these by themselves do not become expressive. As Abhinavagupta points out, 'their power is due to their association with the causes and circums-

tances of the emotion.' Again, 'Emotions are manifested by their contexts; when these contexts are expressed by a suitable language the power of the emotions is transferred to the words'.23 The *Rasa* Theory rejects the figurationist *(alaṁkāra)* argument that poetic language involves a deviant or special manner of expression. For this speciality or deviancy is not only difficult to isolate (because 'normal usage' itself is difficult to define), but it is also not a necessary or sufficient condition of a work being a poetic work. The concept of *Dhvani* or poetic indirection developed by Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta has no doubt enjoyed enormous prestige in Sanskrit criticism through the ages. But the logic of the *Rasa* Theory forced even the original proponents of *Dhvani* to admit that *rasa* is the first concern of poetic meaning as well as its final resting point, and that, in fact, *dhvani* is no other than the power of words to evoke *rasa*. But then this power, they themselves show, does not inhere in the language but in the context.24

Style in poetry is, then, to be understood as any disposition of words or any choice of diction which is best suited to the emotion in hand *(rasocitaśabdavyavahāra)*. Style is contingent upon a style-creating context, which in poetry is the emotive situation. Without such a context stylistic or structural features do not even become significant as style. In the final analysis, style is the embodiment of certain tone qualities or *guṇas* which are the inalienable attributes of the emotions. But its relation to the emotions is variable and contingent in the sense that it does not follow from the emotion. Thus, an energetic style consisting of a collocation of harsh syllables like ś, ṣ, ṛ, ḍ, and aspirated consonants, or of compound constructions may be found suitable for expressing fury, disgust, and the like. But the converse is not true, since the furious sentiment can also be expressed in an uncompounded style or in soft syllables, and a compound construction too may be used appropriately in the depiction of the erotic sentiment.25

Just as style is a contingent factor, form too is variable in relation to the emotion. That is to say that there is no conformity between any particular formal organization and any given

emotion. We cannot tell the emotion from the form; we can only demand that the form be adequate to the emotion. No form is organic or analogous in the sense that it is demanded by the nature of the emotion expressed. For instance, the tragic emotion is as well expressed in an epic-narrative as in a dramatic form. And conversely the difference between an epic poem and a 'comic epic' (such as Homer's *Margites*, mentioned by Aristotle) is of greater consequence than the difference between an epic and a tragedy. For expressing the wonderful sense of discovery or the surprising emergence of the beauty of god's creation the loose, effusive form of Whitman's catalogues serves as well as the concentrated structure of Keats's 'Chapman' sonnet or of Hopkins's 'The Windhover' with its wrenched metaphorical style. While forms may be endless—the Sanskrit critics knew of innumerable genres and styles and gave painstaking analyses of them—form itself as a category is no more than a curve describing the trajectory of the emotion, its rise, proliferation, and subsidence *(bhāvodaya, bhāvaśabalatā, bhāvaśānti)*. Any form that carries a mood to its completion is organic, anything that begets a feeling connection. Generic distinctions are not final nor are they binding on the poet or critic. The emergence of a new type such as a *Moby Dick*, *a Song of Myself*, or a *Waste Land* has always tended to upset the apple-cart of the genre theory. It is not of course being argued that the distinctions themselves do not exist or that they are immaterial. One always exmines them in specific instances and then one shows how they are significant for the work. All that is meant is that a more satisfactory basis for formal distinctions would be the emotions with their distinct and characteristic tones.26

Such, in general outline, is the philosophical argument for an emotive theory of poetry as developed by the Sanskrit critics. The present essay does not by any means exhaust all of the implications of this theory, nor does it answer all questions. There is, for instance, the problem of a formal definition of literature with which the Sanskrit critics battled long and hard, and there are also the problems of interpretation and critical agreement not covered by this essay but to which solutions can

be attempted in the light of Sanskrit criticism. The question whether *rasa* can satisfactorily account for all elements of value in poetry and all types of literary discourse has been raised by the Sanskrit critics, and the *rasa* theorist has replied by saying that the belief that a poetic statement can be valued for anything but its emotive element is a chimera. For there is no poetry that has not a touch of the emotion; behind every image or idea is the ghost of an emotion lurking.[27] To conclude, the *rasa* concept offers a most comprehensive and convincing account of poetic semantics and a consistent general theory of poetry. Recent criticism in the West has, however, argued that a general theory of literature is neither possible nor desirable. But its case, I think, has not been made out.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. For an exhaustive account of this discussion see V. Raghavan, *The Number of Rasas* (Madras, 1967).
3. *Daśarūpaka,* IV, 34; and verses quoted by Jagannātha in *Rasagangādhara,* I, 'Sathāyibhāvalakṣaṇam.'
4. Raghavan, p. 161.
5. Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (reprintd, New York, 1967), 1, 151–183. For other parallels see Stephen C. Pepper, *Aesthetic Quality* (New York, 1937).
6. I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London, 1970), ch. 32.
7. I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination* (New York, 1935), p. 94.
8. Robert Penn Warren, 'Pure and Impure Poetry,' in R. W. Stallman, *Critiques and Essays in Criticism,* 1920–1948 (New York 1949), p. 87.
9. See John Casey, *The Language of Criticim* (London, 1966).
10. Huw Morris-Jones, 'The Language of Feelings,' in Harold Osborne, *Aesthetics in the Modern World* (London, 1968), pp. 94–104,
11. Abhinavagupta, 'Locana,' *Dhvanyāloka,* I, 5.

12. See *Bhāvaprakāśana of Śāradātanaya* (Baroda. 1968), p. 154, 1. 9: *śabdopanīta; Sāhityadarpaṇa,* III, 57: *śabdasaṁbhavāt.*
13. Harold Osborne, 'The Quality of Feeling in Art,' *Aesthetics,* pp. 105–124.
14. Ronald W. Hepburn, 'Emotions and Emotional Qualities: Some Attempt at Analysis,' in Osborne, pp. 81–93.
15. Morris–Jones, p. 99.
16. See R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta* (Baranras, 1968), p. 79; also 'Locana,' *Dhvanyāloka,* 1, 5.
17. Alan Donagan, 'Wittgenstein on Sensation,' in George Pitcher, *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (New York, 1966), pp. 324-351.
18. 'The Affective Fallacy,' *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington, 1967), p. 38.
19. Wimsatt argues that emotions in poetry, 'presented in their objects,' are 'contemplated as a pattern of knowledge,' *The Verbal Icon,* p. 38. See also Eliseo Vivas, 'Objective Correlative of T. S. Eliot,' Stallman, pp. 389–400; C. Day Lewis, *The Poet's Way of Knowledge* (Cambridge, 1957). R. S. Crane points out that for Aristotle poetry 'is not itself a mode of knowledge.' See *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* (Toronto, 1953), p. 58.
20. 'Locana,' *Dhvanyāloka,* I, 6: *nāyakasya kaveh śrotuh samāno anubhavaḥ.*
21. *Vākyapadīya,* II, 434, also K. A. S. Iyer, *Bhartṛhari* (Poona, 1969), pp. 213–214.
22. Monroe Beardsley (*Aesthetics,* New York, 1958, p. 118), in objecting to emotive definitions of literature, assumes that 'emotive purport' is an independent function of the language itself—an assumption denied by the *rasa* theorist. But alternative definitions suggested by Beardsley himself and by others are equally unsatisfactory. Implicit meaning or multiple meaning, 'foregrounding,' imitation of an 'illocutionary' act, etc. are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions.
23. 'Locana,' *Dhvanyāloka,* III, 3–4; also III, 16, gloss and Abhinavagupta's commentary. It is pointed out that if some-

times some words are found to be more beautiful than others, it is due to their previous association with emotive contexts. For example, words like 'garland' and 'sandal' become evocative of love in this way, although they cannot evoke this feeling outside of an erotic context. The conclusion is that language, any language, becomes evocative in an evocative context; but the quality of the context itself is not a verbal quality, much less a verbal function.

24. This interpretation of *Dhvani* theory may sound somewhat unorthodox. But a fuller substantiation of it must be reserved for a separate paper.
25. *Dhvanyāloka*, III, 3–4, and gloss on 5.
26. Ānandavardhana, no doubt, admits that differences in the nature of the subject matter, genres, etc. will result in some peculiarities. But the guiding principle is always propriety as to the emotion to be depicted. See *Dhvanyāloka*, III, 9, 33. Most recent exponents of Aristotle, especially the Chicago critics, agree that the emotional effects are crucial to Aristotle's classification of poetic species, e. g., *Tragedy* and *Comedy*. But insofar as Aristotle also bases his classification on purely formal differences, his principles will not hold good for poems with structures of other kinds. As R.S. Crane remarks, formal differentiation must remain inconclusive because formal possibilities are indefinite in number *(Languages of Criticism*, p. 65).
27. See *Dhvanyāloka*, III, gloss on 41–42. All subjects, ideas, and images ultimately get connected with *rasa* as its exciting causes; they have no independent poetic existence apart from *rasa*.

A. C. Sukla

T. S. ELIOT AND THE THEORY OF *RASA*

The purpose of this essay is to review T. S. Eliot's theory of impersonality of art in the light of the Indian doctrine of *Rasa* (which is addressed to a similar inquiry), and to show that the latter offers a more comprehensive and satisfactory explanation of artistic creation.

I

In continuation of the anti-romantic movement of Hulme and Pound, in rejection of the romantic concept that poetry expresses the personal feelings and emotions of the poet, Eliot gave a final shape to the modern classicistic idea of the impersonality of art, i. e., the poet is as impersonal as the scientist and poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics 'which gives us equations for the human emotions.'[1]

In spite of the highly electic character of Eliot's mass of critical writings and a number of knotty and confusing critical phrases and jargons it is nor difficult to summarise systematically the basic ideas of his poetics from some major portions of his writings, particularly his essays 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 'The Metaphysical poets', 'Perfect Critic' and 'Imperfect Critic' and the essay on *Hamlet*. 'Traditon and the Individual Talent' gives us the key-note to his critical assumptions which he tries to justify in other essays. He stresses two points there : a poet is not an isolated individual, as no other individual is, from others of the society or country or from the humanity as a whole. Each and every moment of the immemorial and unending Time is interdependent; thus past is not buried in the dead past, nor is future something new and uncertain. Past, Present and Future are in a way causally and logically related though without losing the significance of each moment in thc eternal flux of this Time. Thus a poet must be assessed simultaneously as an individual and as a part of his tradition at the time of judgement.

The second point deals with the material, the process and finally with the nature of poetic creation and thereby of all artistic creations in general.

The material for all art is emotion, but it not the personal emotion of the artist. Logically, it follows from Eliot's major assumption stated above that, as the artist is not an isolated person from the whole tradition, the emotions that are the materials of his art cannot be also strictly personal. They must be impersonal in the sense that they must represent the emotions of the whole tradition (the typical emotions) of which he is an organic part. Thus the romantic view, that the poet directly expresses his own personal emotions, i.e., his experiences of sorrows and miseries, happiness and suffering, is rejected by Eliot. He terms his impersonal emotions as *significant* emotions.

Now the poetic process or the method of artistic operation : it is neither a *recollection* of the emotions in tranqillity, nor a *spontaneous overflow* of powerful feelings—thus straightly a rejection of the Wordsworthian formula. The artistic operation involves three principles—the principles of correspondence or transmutation, coherence and comperhensiveness.2 This operation takes places in mind; but unlike the romantic critic Eliot disbelieves in the substantial unity of soul or mind, i. e., the suffering mind of the poet cannot be identified with his creative mind; hence there is no question of *recollection* of the poet's personal sufferings and joys. Mind is a medium—a medium of operation. The diverse feelings and emotions of the poet are identified here (principle of comprehensiveness) and, all the parts being integrated into a whole (principle of coherence), are finally transformed completely into a new thing which is poetry(principle of transformation). Though there is some affinity of this operation with the romantic concept of the Secondary Imagination there is nothing mystic in it. The operation is just a technical one quite common in chemical sciences. Mind of the poet is a catalyst which, itself being neutral and unchanged like a filament of platinum that combines oxygen and sulphur dioxide into sulphorous acid, transmutes the raw material of poetry (i.e., emotions neither powerful nor something new or specific, just

ordinary ones). Emotion thus transformed is *significant*, is impersonal, and when expressed in the form of a poem (or art) has its life in the poem itself, not in the history of the poet.

But how to express this transmuted emotion in the form of art ? 'The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.'[3]

Eliot's ideas about the impersonality of art and particularly his theory of 'objective correlative' have been variously criticized by critics like René Wellek, Susanne Langer, Ransom, Praz, Eleseo Vivas, S. E. Hyman and others. But the Indian thinkers, who debated on a parallel problem centuries ago, would have raised the following points : Eliot is not precise as regards his idea of emotions and feelings, i. e., whether they are the states of our mind—permanent or transitory, and in what way they are related to experience. Sometimes emotion, feeling and experience appear synonymous and interchangeable; at others the distinction is rather confusing and unconvincing : that emotion signifies the responses of the poet's mind to the external and internal stimuli which furnish the poet with the raw material which he transforms in poetry; and feeling stands for the responses of the poet's mind which originate not in the external or internal stimuli but are occasioned by the study of literature. Secondly, the poetic process, i.e., the transformation of personal emotions into the impersonal poetic emotions is also obscure. Without giving any logic of this transformation Eliot gives an analogy which may be very alluring, but is surely invalid. A living human mind can never be as neutral as a filament of platinum which is simply a piece of lifeless matter; and this analogy from chemical science is incapable of explaining a sensible affair like the process of poetic creation. Besides, why should art approach the conditions of science at all ? Finally, the method of objectification of the impersonal emotion and its implication that aesthetic enjoyment necessitates the evocation of this (impersonalized?) emotion in

the connoisseur appear misleading from its application to one of the masterpieces of world literature *(Hamlet)*—judging it as an artistic failure.

II

In Indian aesthetics, too, emotions *(bhāva)* are materials of poetry, drama, music and all other arts; and poetry is the objectification of the impersonalized emotions of the poet. This means that : (1) emotions will transcend the personal afflictions or interest of the poet himself, i.e., it must belong to all so that (2) others will take interest in them without being personally attached to them because of their generalization or impersonalization *(sādhāraṇya)*. This generalization takes place as none—neither the poet nor the reader—takes any utilitarian interest in these emotions, their causal efficiency *(arthakriyākāritva)* being lost. This is known as the transformation of *bhāva* (personal emotion) into *Rasa* (impersonalized or generalized emotion) or poetry through a medium which is a complex of character, their actions and transient emotions or feelings *(Vibhāvānubhavavyabhicārisaṁyogaḥ)*.[4]

This needs a little elaboration. Emotions are defined by Indians as mental states *(cittavṛtti)* which may be of two types-permanent or primary *(sthāyi)* and transitory or secondary *(vyabhicāri)* that depend upon the former. Permanent emotion is defined as 'the emotion which is not swallowed up by other emotions whether friendly with it or unfriendly, which quickly dissolves the other into its own condition like the salt-sea, and which endures continuously in the mind,..."[5] The permanent emotions are nine in number—Love, Mirth, Sorrow, Anger, Courage, Fear, Aversion, Wonder and Serenity. The transitory states of mind accompany the durable states emerging from it and being again submerged in it, and they cannot endure for any length of time without attaching themselves to one of the durable states. They are as many as thirty-three in number like Indifference, Doubt, Jealousy, Inertia, Patience, Passion, Shame, etc.

It appears that the transitory emotions may be roughly identified with the feelings of western psycholgy though the permanent emotions are something different from the emotions. They are the qualities and activities of both sense and intellect

and they form the whole of one's experience inherited or rather evolved biologically from last lives and are on constant modification and purification until their final extinction when one achieves liberation, sacrificing all his desires sensual or intellectual. The Sāṁkhya exegetes plead for a subtle body or an ethereal form the material of which is ego *(ahaṁkāra)* that contains these primary emotions as conditioned by the activities *(karma)* of a man. This ethereal form is the substratum of all the essentials that a man inherits from his continuous tradition *(saṁskāra)* from time immemorial, from the very day of his birth—soul's confinement in a corporeal body. Thus the permanent emotions differ in degree and intensity from person to person though they are the same in kind—a combination of three *guṇas—sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.

The root of the poetic process is only one permanent emotion (out of nine) or an emotional complex when a single emotion is predominant. The process involves a stimulant which strikes a particular emotion in a man with strong sensibility. When thus struck, the man who is called a poet, expresses that emotion in the language which again *evokes* the same emotion in another man who reads the poem. Two points are to be noted carefully here : first there may be a personal element in the poet's being struck by the stimuli, but the moment the poet attempts at expression of this emotion it must be impersonal as it loses its personal attachment with the stimuli or with the effect thereof. Otherwise expression would be simply impossible. Commonsense will prove that a lover who is over-whelmed by the sorrow due to the death of his beloved cannot express his emotion in poetry. The Indian critics would not agree with Wordsworth that a recollection of the emotion in tranquillity will explain logically this state of impersonality. Recollection of a powerful emotion may rather sometimes move the man much more than before. The only logical explanation of such impersonalization is that the stimulant, losing its causal efficiency, lacks the utilitarian impact upon the poet. The loss of causal efficiency is proved by the fact that, instead of moving the poet bitterly, an emotion like sorrow gives him a wholesome pleasure. The cause of the

efficacy of the stimulant is not its personal relation with the poet but the poet's extraordinary sympathetic power. It is this sympathy(*sahṛdayatā)*, the root of all aesthetic appreciation, which accounts for the poet's emotion roused by the stimuli and the reader's emotion evoked by the poet's expression of the emotion.

The second point to note is that the intensity and degree of the movement of the emotion of the poet and the reader may vary from case to case as the traditional modification *(saṁskāra*) of their emotions are necessarily different. Hence the impact of the same stimuli will strike different poets with varying intensity and again the intensity of the same emotion in the readers will also vary accordingly.

Abhinavagupta (10th c.) gives a very brilliant analysis of this poetic process in his commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana.6 The origin of the *Rāmāyaṇa,* the great Indian epic written by the first Indian poet, sage Vālmīki, is the lamentation of a he-crane for the death of its she-bird due to shooting of a hunter at the time of their erotic meet. The sage of the purest heart noted it and was deeply touched by the sorrow of the bird for which he cursed the hunter to remain unhappy for ever in his life. Thus the permanent emotion in this sage struck by the lamentation of the bird is sorrow (śoka), and when expressed in language, this emotion is manifested as poetry (śloka), the central theme of whieh is the separation of the hero and heroine ending in pathos.

Abhinavagupta asks : whose sorrow is manifested in poetry? Is it the poet's personal emotion ? and answers in the negative. It is not the personal emotion of the sage-poet; had it been so, there would be no question of poetic activity obviously because a man personally afflicted by sorrow cannot write poetry. The lamentation of the bird of course stimulated the permanent emotion of Sorrow in the sage-poet. But Abhinava suggests that an artist's observation is different from others' in so far as his is an impersonal or detached but sympathetic one. The artist observes things and events as if he is witnessing a drama. Hence he is always compared with a yogin in Indian aesthetics because both of them observe and experience the worldly phenomena

indifferently without any personal involvement *(tāṭasthya)*. They share others' sufferings and happiness by an identification *(tādātmya)* with others which is based on sympathy only.

A step further : it is not also the sorrow of the bird that they identify with. The bird is only an instrument of this stimulation. Through the bird's sorrow they identify with the emotion in its universal form.

It is very interesting to note here that according to Abhinavagupta a poet himself is primarily an aesthete who first relishes the events of the world-drama and then only expresses this relish in his poetry. In the above case the hunter opens the drama by hunting the bird. The he-bird is the principal character *(vibhāva)* who expresses its permanent emotion of sorrow by lamentation, its symptom (*anubhāva*), and the sage perceives the whole scene as the audience of this drama. The sorrow of the bird touches the sage and being sympathetic (*hṛdayasaṁvādī*) he identifies his emotion with that of the bird and thus by this process of generalization (*sādhāraṇikaraṇa*) the identified (*or generalized or impersonlized)* permanent emoiton (*Sorrow*) of the sage is transformed into *Karuṇa rasa* (or tragic joy) which he relished himself; and when it became abundant it overflowed in the form of poetry *(śloka)*, being regulated by the compositional principles of prosody, etc.[7] Thus the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* is the verbal manifestation of this generalized (or depersonalized) or aesthetic emotion of sorrow (*Karuṇa rasa.*) It is by the same process, again, that the reader's permanent emotion of sorrow is evoked and generalized (or depersonalized) which he enjoys finally.

Two questions may be raised here : (1) is then the reader's enjoyment of poetry inferior to that of the poet as it is twice removed from the perception of the world-drama or, in other words, as it is an enjoyment of enjoyment? (2) If emotion is the source of poetry, should its intensity and degree condition that of the creation and enjoyment of poetry? That is to say, can we admit that a poet with more powerful emotion of love can write love poems better than others and, similarly, a reader with intense passion can enjoy it better than other ? Abhinavagupta would answer that though the reader perceives through the per-

ception of the poet, it does not mean that his enjoyment will be inferior to the other's. The intensity of the enjoyment depends upon the intensity of *saṁskāra* and upon the degree of identification or generalization of the emotion concerned. Thus the reader's enjoyment may be sometimes even more than the poet's while less at others. As the poet as well as the reader enjoys the same emotion there is no question of any removement of this enjoyment. Similarly, the answer to the second question is that the creation and the appreciation of art do not depend only upon the intensity of an emotion. The more powerful factor being identification and generalization of the emotion by the power of sympathy(*sahṛdayatā*). It is meaningless to say that a lusty man can write and enjoy love poems or a buffoon can write or enjoy comedies or a hero can write and enjoy heroic poems better than others.

The method of impresonalization of emotion in Indian aesthetics is, then, based on logic and common psychology. There is little mysticism of the romantic and symbolist thinkers or any scientific technicality of the modern classicists in it. Though the Indian thinkers talked of a poetic genius *(pratibhā)* itmeant a power of varied perception and ability for novel creations, and the idea of super-naturality *(alaukikatva)* of the poetic genius differs from Coleridge's sense of the term. Art is supernatural in the sense that all the natural phenomena—emotions, ideas, impulses and events when transformed in art in their generalized from lose their causal efficiency or the power of personal affliction. Love loses shame—its immediate reaction; aversion, hatred; and sorrow, pain; and all in their impersonalized form give the poet and the reader a wholesome joy.

III

Some Indian scholars have paralleled Eliot's idea of 'objective correlative' with the idea of *rasa*. 'The emotion here is *Rasa*, the set of objects, the *vibhāvas*, situation their patterned, organised presentation and the chain of events include not only the episodic stream but also the stream of emotive reactions of the characters to them, the *anubhāvas* and the *saṁcāribhāvas*.' [8] But the first objection to such view is that *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and

saṁcāribhāva must be taken together as a complex whole to produce *rasa* where as Eliot's 'o.c.' does not demand such a complex. For him, it appears, any one of the three—objects, situation and a chain of events—may serve the purpose. Besides, a set of objects may be parallel for *anubhāva*, a situation for *uddipana*, but a chain of events is never a parallel for the Indian idea of *anubhāva* and *vyabhicāribhāva*. Abhinavagupta's idea of the relishable *(āsvādayogya)* state of the impersonal emotion in the poet which he expresses in poetry and similarly its evocation of the same impersonalized emotion in the form of *rasa* in the reader is foreign to Eliot and other propounders of the theory of impersonal art in the West. Abhinava's analysis of the problem is far more subtle and precise than Eliot's.

Eliot's application of the objectification of the impersonal emotion to the judgement of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Abhinavagupta would argue, is a great failure. Eliot's arguements against the success of the play are :[9]

(i) Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion of disgust which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the external facts that have to express it.

(ii) Hamlet's disgust is occasioned by his mother, but his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it; his disgust envelops and exceeds her.

(iii) It is a feeling which he cannot understand; he cannot objectify it, and therefore it remains to poison life and obstruct action.

(iv) The poet Shakespeare did not understand the experience which he wanted to express. It is the buffonery of an emotion which he could not express in art.

And Abhinava's answers to these arguments would have been:

(i) No emotion as such is inexpressible, nor is it in excess of the facts. The truth is that in poetry facts, etc., do not state the emotion directly. They suggest it by indirections. This point needs a little elaboration : Ānandavardhana pleads for an indirect way of expression or the suggestive use of language *(pratiyamānārtha* or *dhvani)* as the soul of poetry.[10] Words have two meanings: (a) the etymological or direct meaning used in all

informational statements such as in history, philosophy and in all sciences, (b) and the indirect meaning which is otherwise called *dhvani* (or *vyañjanā*). When the direct statement is subordinated to the new oblique meaning the impersonalized mental state or emotion emerges into view. Take for example, two expressions regarding the reactions of maidens on hearing the talk about their marriage—

'When there is a talk of bridegrooms, maidens hold their heads down in bashfulness but there is a perceptible thrill in their bodies, which indicates pleasure is listening to such conversation and their willingness to the proposal *(spṛhā)*.'

Here the reaction, the willingness of the maidens being directly stated is just an information where the poetic value is negligible. But in another case, in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṁbhavaṁ*, when Pārvatī listens about her marriage from sage Angirā in front of her father the same reaction of her is stated indirectly :

'As the sage made this proposal, Pārvatī, who was sitting beside her father, hung her head down and began counting silently the leaves of the lotus she was playing with.'

Her hanging down of head and absorption into a trivial occupation are suggestive of her willingness and rapture at the prospect of being married to the great Lord Śiva whom she loves and adores so much. This is the type of expression necessary for poetic emotion.

(ii) Hamlet's mother, who caused the emotion of disgust in him, may not be an adequate equivalent or means of expressing this emotion. Theɹe is no need that the cause or stimuli should be the means of expressing the emotion.

(iii) *Rasa* or aesthetic emotion does not require a clear understanding of an emotion or feeling in the *vibhāva*. Confused feelings and emotion can be very well transmuted (or generalized) aesthetically when expressed obliquely. Ānandavardhana gives a very striking example of such type.[11] Knowing that the husband has been attracted by some other lady and has already enjoyed her and guessing again the state of agitation and anxiety in her husband for a meeting with his beloved, the wife is not sure whether she should request her husband to cut off all

his relations with the beloved or should tolerate this extramerital love of her husband. This confused feeling has been very successfully suggested in her speech:

'You go (to your beloved). Let me alone suffer from long sighs and lamentations. You have betrayed me, but I don't want that you should also suffer, like me, for your separation from her.'

Though the wife allows her husband for his meeting with the beloved, her intention is not so, for how can a wife tolerate willingly the free love of her husband ? Nor can she refrain him form going also, because when he has already betrayed her, how can she expect that he would care for her request? Rather, she would feel more offended if he ignored her request again. Thus a confused feeling is not beyond the poetic expression, rather it enhances the poetic beauty (*camatkāra*) when expressed through suggestion.

(iv) In *Hamlet* Shakespeare fully understands the emotion that he wants to express. It is aversion of Hamlet which is strengthened and enriched by other mental states and has been fully revealed to us by the significant actions (*anubhāvas*) and dr fting thoughts (*saṁcāribhāvas*). Prof. S. C. Sengupta, a very renowned Shakespearean critic of India, has very brilliantly exposed that Shakespeare has very successfully projected Hamlet's aversion largely through this *dhvani*, i.e., through Hamlet's character—his sporadic activity, his deep disgust, his subtle but confused logic, through the descriptions of the court of Elsimore, situations in Denmark, Hamlet's encounter with the ghost and Ophelia, etc.[12]

IV

All this having been said, an important point of argument raised by T. S. Eliot for the readers and critics of poetry still requires examination : 'Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry,'[13] Inspite of the fact that poetry is the manifestation not of the personal emotion of the poet but of the emotion impersonalized, how far can we exclusively depend upon the text or the verbal structure without any reference to the poet whatsoever ? In

answer to this question the Mimāṁsā-philosopher's argument is very suggestive. Apadeva (17th c.) states that the absolute verbal autonomy or impersonality is possible only in those cases where the author is unknown. This is possible only in case of the Vedic texts which are simply visioned by the sages, and not written by any one. Thus the impersonal Vedic texts can be said to contain the absolute impersonality and in reading them we have no business to seek for their authors in any way.[14] Other philosophers of the same school support this view that the scriptural world alone is impersonal, external and self-sufficient whereas human language depends upon the intention of the author. The problem of 'intention' in the meaning of texts is a complicated one and should be postponed to another occasion of discussion; but apart from that it is reasonable to conclude that it is illogical to search for absolute impersonality from personal writings or from text *written* by definite persons. If that would be so, then the very excellence of poetry—the novelty and varieties of poetic vision would be meaningless. Impersonalization of an emotion, love, for example, being the same everywhere poetry would be utterly boring. In rejecting the evolutionary process of the artistic perfection Eliot very remarkably states that art never improves though its material changes.[15] Art's materials being emotions we may say that this change in these emotions is due to the personal or individual vision of the poets. An honest critic need not of course search for the biographical data of the poet, but his studies and appreciation will certainly remain incomplete if he does not realize the distinguished personal spirit of the poet that permeates through the whole fabric of the poetic creation.

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8. Krishna Chaitanya, *Sanskrit Poetics*(Bombay, 1965), pp. 19-20.
9. *Hamlet* (1919).
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12. Sengupta, *Aspects of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Calcutta : O.U. P., 1972), p. 158 ff. (The essay is included in the present volume).
13. *S. W.*, p. 53.
14. *Mīmāṁsānyāya Prakāśa* (Bombay, 1944), P. 2.
15. 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in *SW*; for a distinction between the concepts of 'personal' and 'individual' see Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (London : O. U. P., 1930), pp. 127-28. Eliot might have been influenced by his view.

V. K. Gokak

THE CONCEPT OF *RĪTI-GUṆA* AND THE IDEA OF STYLE

When we think of Style in poetry, we take into account formal constituents of poetry like language, rhythm and imagery; for style, after all, is language though it is language that has incorporated in itself elements like the poet's vision, attitudes, moods, thoughts and themes. The discussion regarding style has been lively and prominent in Western as well as in Indian literary criticism.

Vocabulary and syntax; the four-fold capacity of Rhythm; Thought or content and all its range from opacity to transparency; Imagery in all its variety; Attitudes and Moods : It is on the choice determined by the quality of the poet's vision from among the possibilities under each one of these heads that the nature of the poet's style rests. The word 'Form' includes the entire process referred to in relation to style with the addition of the choice of a literary form and the tone that this form induces in the body of a poem. Generally speaking, Form has Vision as its soul and Vision has Form as its body.

I have said that language, rhythm, thought, imagery, mood and attitude that a poet chooses, determine the style of his poem. But this choice itself is determined by the nature and quality of his genius and of that vision of Reality which has moved him to compose the poem or the work of art in question.

Style, then, is the amalgam, the fusion of all those constituents of a work of art which are there to express the poet's vision. The vision itself partly affects the nature of the style that is employed to express it and so does the literary form through which the work of art is projected. The style is the man. But it is equally true to say that the style is the work of art itself. An opinion is loosely entertained that, by style, we mean the language or diction employed by the poet. Some

others think that style means diction to which are added qualities like lyricism, humour, satire, wit, pathos, etc. These latter are actually one with the moods or attitudes of the poet. Even then, it is only a partial description of style. Style is really the exploitation, by the writer or poet, of a few of the possibilities selected out of many, under each of the following heads, to give a faithful and sensitive expression of his vision : language; rhythm; thought; imagery; mood and attitude.

The doubt may arise whether style really selects, for the purpose of fusion, possibilities under all these heads. For instance, one may wonder what rhythm has to do with style. But we have only to remember the style employed in the Authorised Version of the Bible, Burton, Sir Thomas Browne, Lamb, De Quincey, Ruskin and Macaulay in prose and Swift, Pope, Masefield, A. E. Housman, Robert Frost and others in verse to realise how rhythm is a significant constituent of style. Similarly, we may ask the question whether Thought affects style in any way. Argumentative poetry as in Dryden and Pope, the poetry of statement, direct and oblique poetry, symbolic poetry have, each one of them, a unique and individual style, depending upon the suppression, subordination or dominance of Thought in the kind of poetry concerned. Again, the presence of imagery in varying degrees determines the nature of style. There is the rhetorical style of a writer like Macaulay in which imagery is superadded, as it were. Imagery is an organic part of the lyrical style such as we find in Lamb. Swift's prose, on the other hand, is plain and matter-of-fact, with hardly any imagery in it. Directness in poetry results generally in a plain style. A style like Shakespeare's is a richly metaphorical style.

As for moods and attitudes, I suppose it is clear that a lyrical style will be quite different from a witty or satirical style. The expression of a mood does colour style in some measure at least. Again, if the expression of a certain attitude dominates a work of art, it is bound to result in a significant divergence in the matter of style. Ben Jonson's *Volpone* is a satirical play. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is full of beauty and sublimity. Congreve's *The Way of the World* is a play of wit. The basic attitudes

present in these works of art account for their individual style in some measure, quite apart from the genius and personality of the writers and the age in which they lived.

The different kinds of poetic vision also bring about changes in the kind of style in which they are expressed. Style, therefore, is not merely an affair of language and moods. It represents a fusion of elements selected from among the possibilities under Language, Rhythm, Thought, Imagery, Mood, Attitude and Vision.

It is also good to remember that the theme or the subject-matter selected by the poet for giving a 'local habitation' to his vision is bound to leave some traces of its own on the style of the poet.

Style is, above all, language. So is a work of art. All other constituents of art have to be incorporated into language and it is language that has to accommodate and express them. They have no independent existence. They live in and through language. At the same time, the language found in a work of art is not the naked language spoken in the streets or in the parlour. It is language so patterned, strengthened, refined and charged that it expresses Rhythm, Thought, Imagery, Mood, Attitude and Vision. And that is Style.

The varieties of style are bound to be numerous. Let us remember that the poet is free to use numerous *kinds* of words in the proportion of his own choice; different sentence patterns and syntactical devices; various transitions in subject-matter or thought all the way from opacity to transparency; moods of great variety; diverse attitudes; and five levels of vision focussed on innumerable situations. The amalgam, therefore, is based on a few permutations or combinations chosen out of many, many more. Consequently, there will be numberless styles in the field. It is literally true to say that there will be as many styles as there are writers.

There is the folk style of Burns in poems like 'My love is like a red, red rose', where commonly known words and images form the basis of the structure of style. There is the plain style in some of the poems of Wordsworth and A. E. Housman

bordering on the colloquial :

Malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.

We have the decorative style of Spenser with the diction standing out like a piece of tapestry—archaic words and rich fancies drawing our attention to themselves. The metaphorical style of Shakespeare reveals images, one crowding on the other. The grand style of Milton is full of involved and outlandish syntax, learned vocabulary and images frequently drawn from the world of scholarship, creating an effect of vastness. There is the musical style of Swinburne, emphasizing melody more than the meaning. T. S. Eliot's style is noted for its fresh images, new turns of language and technical vocabulary. G.M. Hopkins and Dylan Thomas have an original style. Hopkins brings in words unknown to poetry, at least in the sense in which he uses them. And Dylan Thomas has new syntactical and lexical devices.

The Kinds of style mentioned are mostly characterised by their use of language, rhythm or imagery. But it is also possible to speak of style from the point of view of Vision, Attitude, Mood and Thought. One can speak of the realistic style of Crabbe or the didactic style of Pope, the humorous or satirical style of Dryden and Pope, the 'metaphysical wit' in the style of John Donne, the pathetic style of Otway, the ironic and paradoxical style of modernist poets like W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis and so on. It seems that, by and large, formal characteristics endow some styles with individuality. Some other styles derive their uniqueness from their thought-substance, mood, attitude or vision. The style of the same poet may reveal the predominance of one set of features here and another there. Of course, a poet's style can be fully described only when we have studied the inflections and affixes, the kind of lexis and syntax, rhythm, imagery, thought (theme as well as reflection), mood, attitude and vision that the poet uses, choosing a few out of many possibilities.

This concept of style, including constituents ranging from affixes and lexis to vision, may help to explain some of the obs-

curities in the idea of style formed by Sanskrit aestheticians. Again, their idea of style may help to enrich our own view of it. They use words like *mārga, rīti, bandha, rachnanā* and *sanghatanā* to describe what is known as style in English. The last three words are concerned largely with diction or language and rhythm. The first two are more inclusive.

The *mārgas* had regional names to begin with. The dignified and scholarly style was known as Gouḍī or north-eastern. The style that could be appreciated by all was known as *Vaidarbhī* or southern. A third style was recognised later on, *Panchātī*. It did not have many compounds like *Gouḍī*. But it had many marvellous turns of speech and a refined and delicate meaning.

Kuntaka removed these regional names and pointed out that the nature of style really depended on the temperament of the poet concerned. He recognised three kinds of style and called them the *sukumāra* or delicate, *vichitra* or strange and *madhyama* or middle. The *sukumāra* style has a spontaneous beauty about it. It does not care for the dry bones of scholarship or mere rhetoric. It has in it a surpassing beauty of word and meaning. The *vichitra* is a studied and difficult style full of a natural obliquity of expression. The *madhyama* style has the spontaneous beauty of the first and the natural obliquity of the second.

Though Kuntaka describes three broad categories of style, he knows that their precise formation depends upon a number of factors like the poet's genius, temperament, scholarship, etc. and that, therefore, there will be innumerable individual styles. The inseparable togetherness of word and meaning is the source of poetry. The word and meaning that a poet has ready to hand differ from poet to poet. Each poet has, therefore, a style of his own.

In trying to explain the nature of these three kinds of style, aestheticians turned more and more to the *guṇas* or qualities with which words and meanings are endowed in poetry. Otherwise the nature of these styles would have remained nebulous. A stanza or two given as illustrations of each style could hardly have clarified its distinguishing features. Bhāmaha mentions three

such *guṇas* which, in a way, are comparable to the three kinds of style, mentioned above. *Mādhurya* or sweetness is one of them. It is free from many compounds. It neither reaches the heights of *ojas* or brilliance, nor does it come down to the plains of *prasāda* or lucidity. Kālidāsa illustrates this quality. *Ojas* or brilliance is full of excessive imaginative effects, the use of learned and multi-semantic words and elaborate compounds. Bāṇa's *Kādambari* is full of *ojas*. *Prasāda* or lucidity is a *guṇa* the beauty of which young and old alike appreciate. It is easy to understand. There are no compounds in it and the words used are very simple. The diction has a remarkable sweetness about it. The style of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is full of this quality.

These *guṇas*, then, do not take us any farther than the three *mārgas* or styles. It is possible that Daṇḍin and Vāmana named these very three *guṇas* metioned by Bhamaha as *mārga* and *rīti* respectively. But other writers have ventured farther in this direction. Bharata mentions ten *guṇas* in his *Nātya-śāstra*. The *Agni Purāṇa* mentions eighteen in all—six related to the word, six to meaning and six to both together. Vāmana enumerates ten *guṇas* related to meaning and ten to the word. We may consider these *guṇas* mentioned by Vāmana in some detail as they are likely to throw some light on the nature of Style itself.

We have to note, in the first place, that poetry is *sāhitya*, togetherness, the togherness of word and meaning which, as Kālidāsa says, are wedded together, like the Lord and his Śakti and are inseparable. It is not, therefore, possible to speak of *guṇas* which are exclusively related to the word and others exclusively to meaning. But one can say that some are predominantly related to the word and some to meaning. It is only in this sense that one can speak of *sabda guṇas* and *artha guṇas*.

Secondly, we have also to be aware of the fact that *guṇas* are not concerned solely either with the subject-matter or with the temperament of the poet. They are the beauty to which language attains, like the beauty of woman which does not depend on any one limb of her body or feature, when language has been shaped into a glowing expression of the poet's vision,

attitude, mood and thought (including subject-matter). Language makes its own choice under lexis, syntax and rhythm and employs figures of speech, thought and rhythm, sparingly or abundantly as suits the purpose, in order to express, in the most precise manner possible, the poet's vision, attitude, mood and thought. It will be seen that *alaṁkāras* or figures of thought, speech and rhythm contribute actively to the formation of the *guṇas* in a style, as other poetic constituents do. It is not correct to say that *alaṁkāras* or figures are projected by the poet's imagination and that *guṇas* inhere either in the nature of language itself or in the poet's temperament. A transformation takes place at each stage in the poetic process. The poet's vision expresses itself in terms of the attitudes aroused in him and the moods kindled by them when they are aroused. Attitude and mood find a bodying forth in the brain-stuff or thought-system in the poem and the theme which holds them together. It is possible to say, at each one of these stages, that the vision is the poem, the attitudes and moods are the poem, the thought-system is the poem or the theme is the poem. The attitudes and moods are none other than the stuff of the poet's vision itself, transformed into attitudes and moods. The thought-system is, again, the intellectual equivalence of the attitudes and moods which are now seen to be this thought-system. The theme is, once more, the story or slice of life into which the thought-system has been transformed by the poet. I do not mean to suggest that all these transformations have to take place successively in the poet's mind. They can even happen simultaneously. But the point is that all these layers are recognisably present there and are fused together in the work of art.

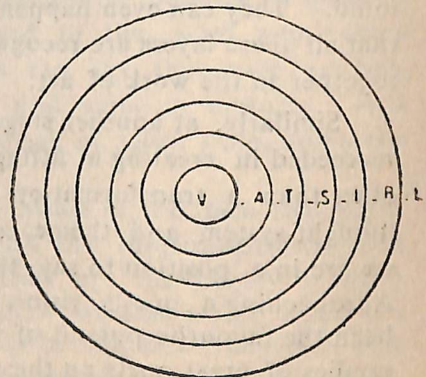
Similarly, at another stage, when the poet's imaginations has succeeded in creating a fitting world of imagery which is none other than a transformation of the vision, attitudes, moods, thought-system and theme into a body of equivalent images, we are in a position to say that the imagery itself is the poem. Approaching a poet's vision and art through his imagery has been the favourite pursuit of scholars in recent years and several studies of great poets on these lines are now available.

Whenever we study the metrical skill and variety displayed in a poem, we are really studying the poem as Rhythm—as the subtle body that the poet's musical delight has prepared for his vision, attitude, mood, thought, theme and imagery. The prosody of Shakespeare and Milton has particularly been studied in detail on these lines.

A poem is, therefore, a summing up, a telescoping, as it were, of all the *avatārs* or incarnations of the poet's vision when it passes through the various stages mentioned above. The vision is the soul that sustains all these births or lives and shines through them. And it happens that all these layers are imbedded in language. The poet's language is all things to all men. Do you wish to perceive the poem as imagery ? That *avatār* of the poem can be isolated and studied as part of the language of the poem. Do you wish to visualise the poem as a thought-system and a theme ? The corresponding part of the language of the poem, including the connotation as well as the denotation of words, is waiting there, ready for you. Perhaps you wish to experience the poem as a series of attitudes and moods. You cannot do better than plunge into those layers of the language in which this particular *avatār* of the poem has been held captive. You have to peep through inner meaning, imagery and rhythm, all telescoped into each other, before you can identify this *avatār* which is perceivable through them alone. As for the poet's vision, the soul of the poem, you can stand face to face with it only when you have x-rayed the *avatār* of attitudes and moods. But you can experience the poem integrally only when you have experienced the poet's vision through all the layers in which it has incanated itself.

A poem could perhaps be represented as a series of concentric circles around the centre called the poet's vision:

V= Vision
A= Attitude
T= Thought
S= Subject-matter or theme
I= Imagery
R= Rhythm
L= Language



By a stretch of imagination we should concede the fact that there concentric circles are not disparate, unconnected circles. The centre transforms itself into the first concentric circle even while it remains as a centre. The first concentric circle transforms itself into the second even while it remains as the first till we come to the outermost or largest concentric circle which holds within itself the substance of the other five concentric circles as well as the centre itself. This outermost circle is the language of the poem. When we regard this language as nothing more than inflections, affixes, lexis and syntax, it is only the outermost circle and nothing more. We study the nature of the poet's language and the aspects of lexis and syntactical structure which he has drawn upon for the purpose he had in view. But when we regard this outermost circle as a concentric circle, holding within itself the substance of all the other concentric circles and the centre, it is no longer mere language. It is language that has been transformed into Style, even while it remains recognisably as language. Vision, Attitude, Mood, Thought, Theme, and Rhythm have been fused with language in the alembic of the poet's imagination. Language has suffered a sea-change. 'Pearls are those that were his eyes.'

How can we distinguish mere language from language that has been transformed into Style ? It is here that the *guṇas* mentioned by Sanskrit aestheticians are of great use to us. The language that has become Style is characterised by the presence of *guṇas*. Mere language is just lexis and syntax. There are no *guṇas* in it. It is only the language that has received all these *saṁskāras*--all this refinement at the hands of the poet, that is, the summation of all the concentric manifestations of the poet's vision. Language which has not received this orientation can only be *nirguṇa*—colourless, featureless and without any excellence.

The *guṇas* themselves have, no doubt, been written about by Sanskrit aestheticians. But what one writer says about some of them is likely to be cancelled by the remarks of another. The same writer's description of *guṇas* is not, sometimes, mutually exclusive. There may be a good deal of overlapping. The

practice of illustrating a *guṇa* by referring to a stanza or two is not satisfactory, considering the fact that the psychological and synthetic process which the formation of *guṇas* represents is a complex one. This may sometimes be adequate while referring to *guṇas* related to the word. But the elucidation is utterly inadequate as related to *artha guṇas* or excellences of meaning.

Vāmana speaks of ten *guṇas* related to the word. He also mentions ten *artha guṇas* and calls them by the same names that he has given to the *śabda guṇas*. The *guṇas* are : *Ojas; Prasāda*; *Śleṣa*; *Samatā*; *Samādhi*; *Mādhurya*; *Soukumārya*; *Udāratā*; *Arthavyakti*; and *Kānti*.

How shall we distinguish *śabda guṇas* from *artha guṇas* ? For our purpose, the *śabda guṇas* may be said to indicate the predominance of the following features in the synthesis called Style : inflections and affixes; lexis; syntax; rhythm; imagery. The *artha guṇas* will then indicate the predominance of Vision, Attitude, Mood, Thought and Theme. Both the *artha guṇas* and the *śabda guṇas* reside in the same poem or work of art. But viewing them separately helps us to realise the composite nature of its style.

Let us consider the *śabda guṇas* now. Daṇḍin says that—

(1) *Ojas* is characterised by an abundance of compound forms. Vāmana adds to this by saying that its syntax should be taut or high-strung and not loose. Jagannātha remarks that *ojas* refers to a syntax in which a double consonant is mostly preceded by short vowels. Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy translates *ojas* as 'brilliance'.

(2) *Prasāda* or 'lucidity' expresses well what 'oft was thought' and is familiar and within the range of common experience. *Prasāda* gives the impression that such a meaning was never so well expressed before.

(3) *Śleṣa* : This also is said to be distinguished by taut or well-knit construction, How shall we distinguish it from *ojas ?* The only point is that compounds are not specifically mentioned here. But Vāmana refers to it as an excellence which produces the impression that many of the words used by the poet are

really tantamount to one word. (Thus the 'Himālayas', a single word, are described as follows : 'There in the north is the king of mountains, god-ensouled, *Himālayaḥ* by name'). We may say that the syntax also should be well-knit and not loose.

(4) *Samatā* means uniformity of texture in the language. It may be soft, plain or mixed.

(5) *Samādhi* consists in attributing the function of one object to another in a proper and becoming manner. When we say that 'The bard had a sharp tongue', we are attributting the nature of bard to the tongue itself. Jagannātha says that *samādhi* consists in the regular alternation of taut or well-knit and loose syntax (or lines). *Prasāda* does the same but in an irregular manner, bringing out the contrast between the two types of construction.

(6) *Mādhurya* or sweetness consists, according to Daṇḍin, in refinement of expression. The expression should be figurative or oblique rather than plain and direct. Jagannātha says that, behind a double consonant, there should be a vowel other than a short one. We may add that this sweetness also means sweetness of versification or rhythm.

(7) *Soukamārya* consists in the presence of words which are not cacophonous or harsh-sounding.

(8) *Udāratā* : Here we have a touch of *lokottartā* or extraordinariness in description and a use of adjectives leading to intensity of feeling. There is also an exceeding refinement of speech. Here is an illustration : 'The enemy that encounters you on the battlefield will not be able to return to his town in the same body.'

(9) *Arthavyakti* means perspicacity of meaning—the expression which is organised in such a way that no effort has to be made to get at the meaning. Here is an instance : 'Because of the pollen fallen from the lake-born lotus, the lake put on a golden view.' If the first clause had not been there it would have been difficult to make out the meaning of the sentence. Jagannātha says that *arthavyakti*, on the side of meaning, consists in communicating neatly the unusual action or size of the object which is in question. He also says that some aestheticians have

regarded this very mode of expression as *svabhāvokti* or naturalistic and direct utterance. He gives an instance : 'The lotus-eyed girl stood in the company of elders. I was about to strike her gently with lotus-seeds. She stopped me by biting her tongue and winking at me.'

(10) *Kānti* : There is a great deal of divergence between Danḍin and Vāmana on this *guṇa*. Danḍin says that this excellence is seen in an inviting and attractive communication of *lokavārtā* or the world news or a report. On the other hand, Vāmana says that it resides in a construction or stringing together of words which are full of of *ujwalatā* or splendour. There is thc glow of *rasa* in it. If Jagannātha's word is to be taken, this will be achieved by using words which are learned.

Let us now see how, by ourselves, we can define these *guṇas* as related to the word, since we have said that they are concerned with inflections and affixes, lexis, syntax, rhythm and imagery.

(1) *Ojas* is characterised by the abundance of compounds, well-knit syntax and double consonants preceded by short vowels. The rhythm here, consequently, will be vigorous, not sweet. 'Ojas' is 'brilliance', We may say that it suggests imagery which is hyperbolic or striking.

(2) *Śleṣa* is akin to this. It also has well-knit syntax. As for lexis, it does not have an abundance of compounds like *ojas* but many words which are out to elaborate the meaning of a single word that is used. Nothing special can be said about its rhythm. As for imagery, we may say that it is inclined to be lofty.

(3) *Udāratā* is allied to these two excellences. Extraordinary description and objectives full of intensity of feeling are found in such writing. One can expect the imagery to be full of dignity or splendour and the rhythm to be lofty and dignified.

All these three *guṇas* are allied to each other and indicate a style which is close-knit in syntax, learned, high-sounding or splendid in its imagery.

Three other *guṇas* can be grouped together to indicate another variety of style.

(4) *Prasāda* is 'lucidity'. It aims at simple sentences and familar words and a real refinement of expression. The rhythm is likely to be easy and smooth and the imagery pretty common.

(5) *Arthavyakti* goes with *prasāda*. It is 'perspicacity'. It is even said to be close to *svabhāvokti*. All that is said about *prasāda* is applicable here.

(6) *Samādhi* may be said to come in here. It alternates between well-knit and loose syntax. This means that it may have a few compounds in it. It will have simple sentences and many familiar words. As for imagery, it will have colourful language, employing quite a few figures of speech.

(7) *Samatā* will also go with these *guṇas*. It means uniformity and sweetness of texture, the language being soft, plain or a mixture of soft and plain expression. It will have simple sentences, familiar words, smooth versification and common imagery.

(8), (9), (10) *Mādhurya, Soukumārya* and *Kānti* go together. They indicate the third kind of style, the sweet and lyrical one. *Mādhurya* or sweetness stands for refined and figurative expression and sweetness of versification. *Soukumārya* means 'delicacy' or 'tenderness'. It takes in words that are not harsh-sounding. If *kānti* is interpreted after Danḍin, it will be another *guṇa* like *arthavyakti* or perspicacity. It is better to say with Vāmana and Jagannātha that it consists in the use of words that are not unlearned and words which are full of splendour. The rhythm will be soaring and grand and the imagery dazzling. On the side of meaning, Vāmana says that there is the glow of *rasa* in it.

These three kinds of style bring us to Kuntaka's substitutions for the *Gouḍī*, *Pānchālī* and *Vaidarbhī* styles—the *vichitra* or florid, the *madhyama* or middle or plain and the *sukumāra* or delicate and tender style. Within the orbit of these three kinds of style, each *guṇa* has its own individuality and its affiliations.

We may now examine the *artha guṇas*. They are also ten in number and Vāmana has retained the same names for them. We may arrange them according to their affiliations and offer such additional comments as are necessary. We fined that the *artha*

guṇas also fall practically into groups similar to those that have been formed before.

The first group consists of *ojas*, *śleṣa* and *udāratā*. The meaning which has *ojas* in it will be expressed through significant adjectives. Its *prouḍhiḥ* or lofty skill in communication is conveyed to us through many devices. Four are mentioned by Jagannātha : the elucidation of the meaning of a word by using many words; conveying the meaning of many words through a single chosen word; the elucidation of the meaning of a sentence by using many sentences; and conveying the meaning that might have required many sentences for its communication through only one sentence.

Śleṣa means the employment of a certain amount of skill and cunning in a methodical manner so that the meaning that the poet has in view unfolds itself effectively. Vāmana gives an example : 'A cunning man saw his two beloveds sitting on the same seat. Pretending to play hide and seek with one of them, he closed her eyes and, bending his neck in the other direction, kissed the other one who was thrilled and full of love, mirth and smiles.' But I think that what Danḍin, Rudraṭa and others say about *śleṣa* as a figure of speech and thought needs to be borne in mind in this context. *Śleṣa* means the multi-sematicism of a word. Puns are made possible when a word has several meanings. Thus the Sanskrit word *rājan* means both 'king' and 'moon'.

Udāratā avoids unrefined meanings and expressions.

The second group consists of *prasāda*, *arthavyakti*, *samatā* and *samādhi*. *Prasāda* expresses, with proper words, the precise meaning that the poet has in view. *Arthavyakti* is also explained in very much the same way as with reference to the Word. *Samatā* consists in arranging meaning in an orderly manner, without any incogruities. Thus here is a sentence which begins with Hari (Vishnu) as father and not as brother, so that the proper order is not uspet : 'Hari alone is father, mother, brother, friend, everything.' Jagannātha says that *samādhi* comes into being when the poet begins to wonder whether he has described the subject on hand before or whether what he has

taken up now bears resemblance to the subject that he had described before. This statement does not tell us much about *samādhi*.

The third group consists of three *guṇas—mādhurya, soukumārya* and *kānti*. *Mādhurya* consists in conveying the variations of an idea in tellingly and attractively different ways. This is what Jagannāth says. This has, of course, to be supplemented by other comments.

Soukumārya consists in obviating the rough contours of meaning and toning down its harshness. It almost amounts to the use of euphemism as a figure of speech. This is what both Vāmana and Jagannātha have said. Thus a person who is dead is referred to, not as the 'late so-and-so' but as one who is *yaśaḥśeṣa* or 'lives but in his reputation'.

Kānti, as related to Meaning, retains the same characteristics as when related to the Word. Vāmana says that, as an *artha guṇa*, it has the glow of *rasa* in it.

Another point needs to be dealt with before we finalise our statement about the *guṇas*. Bharata spoke of certain other modes known as *vrittis*. These were aspects of subject-matter associated with four aspects of histrionics or the acting of a play. The four aspects of acting were *āngika, vāchika, sātvika* and *āhārya*. The four *vrittis* suited to these four aspects of acting were : *kaiśikī, sāttvatī, ārabhaṭī* and *bhāratī*. These modes or *vrittis* gradually turned into suitable occasions for the manifestation of *rasa* and got blended with the *rītis* or styles that were already there in the writing. It then happened, as Shri B. K. Sivaramiah says in his *Alaṁkara Śastra* in Kannada, that both *rīti* and *vritti* remained dependent on the situation of *rasa* for a definition of their precise nature in a given context. *Vrittis* came gradually to be associated with *rasa* and meaning and *rītis* were narrowed down so as to indicate a relation only with words. But this development need not affect the main line of our argument and we may retain the word *rīti* fori ndicating all that the word 'style' stands for.

Reverting to the ten *guṇas*, it will be found that there is no conflict in any way between the features attributed to a *guṇa* on

the side of the Word and those attributed on the side of Meaning. These two sets of features can coexist. They even lead to mutual enrichment. Take *ojas*, for example. As related to the Word, it has an abundance of compound forms, a well-knit syntax and the sound of double consonants preceded by short vowels. On the side of Meaning, it is said to reside in the use of significant adjectives and *prouḍhiḥ* or lofty skill in communication through several devices. There is consistency in attributing all these features to a single *guṇa*, for they make sense when they are held together. *Śleṣa* is attributed a verbal feature which is practically the same as that of *ojas*. Its semantic feature is distinctive and gives it a place in this group. *Udāratā* stands for extraordinary description and the presence of adjectives full of intensity of feeling.

Coming to the second group, *prasāda* stands for what oft was thought but never so well expressed. It expresses with proper words the precise meaning that the poet has in view. *Arthavyakti* means that the diction is so simple that no effort is necessary to get at the meaning. This is also equated with the figure of speech named *svabhāvokti*. *Samatā* consists in arranging meaning in an orderly manner, without any incongruities. On the verbal side, it has sweetness and uniformity of texture, the language being soft, plain or mixed. *Samādhi* alternates between well-knit and loose syntax. Thus it may have a few compounds in it. On the side of Meaning, it comes into being when the poet begins to wonder whether he has described the subject on hand before.

As for the third group, *mādhurya* stands for refined and figurative expression and for conveying the variations of an idea in tellingly and attractively different ways. *Soukumārya* is delicacy or tenderness and it consists in the avoidance of harsh-sounding words and the replacement of harsh meaning by euphemistic expression. *Kānti* consists in the use of words that are not unlearned and of words that are full of splendour. There is *rasadīpti* or the glow of *rasa* in it.

It should be clear from what has been said above that Vāmana has not, in effect, listed two sets of *guṇas*, one related to

the Word and another to Meaning. If they were two different sets, he should really have given them two different sets of names, But they are essentially the same ten *guṇas*. All that he has done is to list their verbal and semantic characteristics separately. In fact, we are able to visualise these *guṇas* more clearly when we pool together their verbal as well as semantic characteristics.

While recounting the verbal features of the *guṇas*, Vāmana has taped lexis and syntax and not always rhythm and imagery. We have to offer supplementary comments on these items. Similarly, on the side of meaning, he has mainly concerned himself with *vāchyārtha*, the prose meaning, and not so much the *pratīyamānārtha*, the essential poetic meaning. This latter consists of the substance of the poet's vision, attitudes and moods. The prose meaning includes the *vastu* or the theme and *tatva* or the poet's thought.

We have therefore to add to the features of the ten *guṇas*, already set forth, by collectıng the features that arise from the impact of Vision, Attitude and Mood on the other constiuents of poetry. Sanskrit aestheticians have offered a few comments on the impact of Attitude or *Rasa* and the other, and more particularly, the formal constituents of poetry. Thus *ojas* is the result of the impact of Ardour, Repulsion and Terror on language and meaning. The impact of Sublimity, and sometimes of Beauty, is said to result in *Udāratā*. I may add that *Śleṣa* is produced by the impact of Objectivity, Intellectuality or Criticism.

Coming to *Prasāda*, *Arthavyakti*, *Samatā* and *Samādhi*, it has been said that these could be produced by any of the Attitudes. The Sanskrit aestheticians think that *prasāda* is excellence which could be employed by any of the *rasas*. More particularly, I may say that narrative, realistic, descriptive and sometimes even critical writing leads to the formation of these *guṇas*. Hence the Attitudes of Objectivity, Intellectuality and Criticism may be said more prominently connected with these excellences. As for *Mādhurya*, *Soukumārya* and *Kānti*, they are in evidence where the Attitudes of Subjectivity, Pity, Sorrow, Beauty or

Peace are active.

This is a rough and ready statement to make about the impact of Attitudes on language. Fine distinctions have to be made between the kind of impact that leads to *ojas*, *udāratā* or *śleṣa*, or to the different attitudes in the other two groups. This is in itself a detailed inquiry which calls for a separate treatment. But I believe that enough has been said to indicate the possibilities in this direction.

The impact of Moods on the other constituents is sure to lead us in this very direction. In fact, the Attitudes which do not have central prominence turn into moods. The lyrical mood leads us to the *mādhurya* group; the humorous mood partly to the *mādhurya* and partly to the *prasāda* group; the witty and satirical mood to the *prasāda* group; the sardonic and the vituperative to the *ojas* group; melancholy and discontent to the *mādhurya* group; and wonder, astonishment, enthusiasm or rapture partly to the *mādhurya* and partly to the *ojas* group and so on. Stoicism or despair may lead to the *ojas* group.

As for the poet's Vision, his Insight or Practical Judgement leads to the poetry of Objectivity, Intellectuality or Criticism, *i.e.*, to the *Prasāda* group. Intimacy of Vision, with its mood of sadness, delight, enthusiasm, rapture or despair, leads to the poetry of Subjectivity, Ardour, Pity, Sorrow, Delight or Peace —*i. e.*, to *Mādhurya* group. Illumined vision leads to the poetry of all the Attitudes mentioned under Intimacy of Vision. But it leads primarily to the *Ojas* group diluted here and there by the *Mādhurya* group. Intensity of Vision, *i.e.*, the Vision born of an intuitive identity with the object, leads to the poetry of Subjectivity, Ardour, Repulsion, Terror, Sorrow, Sublimity, Delight or Peace. But it leads to the *Oja*s group, admitting only *Kānti* occasionally from the *Mādhurya* group. Lastly, Vastness of Vision leads to the poetry of Terror, Sublimity or Peace and on to the *Ojas* group.

I think it will be clear even from this inadequate account of Style and *Guṇas* that one can predict in a fairly accurate manner the affinity between the type of the poet's Vision and the

Attitude or Attitudes that it is likely to attract to itself. One can also predict the affinity between the Moods that are likely to colour the Attitudes, the affinity that will obtain between any immediate two in this hierarchy of constituents and, finally, the affinity between all of them and the kind of language which absorbs them into itself. The poet's vision, which is the centre of this concentric system, will not rest satisfied till it has reached the largest and widest possible communicative circumference—language, the circumference which magically absorbs into itself all the intervening layers, and allows them as well as the centre to shine through it severally and collectively.

We may now apply these findings to a poem with a view to testing their validity and smooth functioning. Sri Aurobindo's *Rose of God* is a great lyric. It represents the highest plane, what has been called the Vastness of Vision. It may look as though the poem is a product of intensity of Vision—an intuitive identity with the object. But the Rose of God mentioned here is seven-tinged, with the ecstasies seven. It is really the Infinity of Being hidden in the heart of Becoming. The poem is reproduced below :

ROSE OF GOD

Rose of God, vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven,
Rose of Bliss, fire-sweet, seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven!
Leap up in our heart of humanhood, O miracle, O flame,
Passion-flower of the Nameless, but of the mystical Name.
Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,
Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing!
Live in the mind of our earthhood; O golden Mystery, flower,
Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.
Rose of God, damask force of Infinity, red icon of might,
Rose of Power with thy diamond halo piercing the night!
Ablaze in the will of the mortal, design the wonder of the plan,
Image of Immortality, outbreak of the Godhead in man.
Rose of God, smitten purple with the incarnate divine Desire,
Rose of Life, crowded with petals, colour's lyre!
Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme;

Bridge our earthhood and heavenhood, make deathless the
children of Time.
Rose of God, like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face,
Rose of Love, ruby depth of all being, fire-passion of Grace!
Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Natures' abyss;
Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss.

The Rose of God contains within itself the seven energies or the seven worlds—*Bhooḥ* or the material world, *Bhuvaḥ*, the world of *Prāṇa* or the vital self, *Swar* or world of mind, *Mahas* or the world of the Truth and the triple divine worlds—*Satya-loka* (Existence), *Tapaloka* (Consciousness) and *Janaloka* (Bliss). The Rose is therefore a symbol of the entire becoming in whose heart dwells the Divine Being. The Attitudes that this over-mental vision has made active in the poem are those of Sublimity, which is experienced in the adoration with which the Rose is viewed and Ardour, felt in the earnest imploration for humanity in lines like 'Live in the mind of our earthhood' 'Bridge our earthhood and heavenhood', etc. A third Attitude is equally prominent, that of Beauty or Delight. Though the poet feels respectful towards the rose and speaks to it in the language of adoration, he has known it intimately though he may not be one with it. He knows it as the Rose which embodies the five powers of the Divine—Bliss, Light, Power, Life and Love. There are five stanzas in the poem and a stanza is devoted to the description of each one of these powers of the Divine. He invokes the Rose of Bliss to transform the heart of humanhood, the Rose of Light to transform the human mind, the Rose of Power to be ablaze in and transform the will of the mortal, the Rose of Life to transform the body of the mortal and the Rose of Love to transform the earth itself by arising from the heart of Nature.

There are no moods in the poem. Ardour and Beauty, which might possibly have come as moods, have assumed equal prominence with Sublimity. This is interesting because Sri Aurobindo is one with this Being in Becoming and yet prays to it for the transformation of humanity.

The theme of the poem and the thought in it may be consi-

dered together. The theme is the poet's vision of the Being in the heart of Becoming and his prayer addressed to the Being to transform humanity into a race of supermen. The thought in the poem lays bare the nature of the Being. Being is composed of seven energies or ecstasies. It is at work in the Becoming, *i.e.*, in this universe, in order to bring about its eventual or evolutionary transformation. It is doing this by using five powers of its own—a fire-sweet bliss, a wisdom which is the core of the ultimate seeing, a force of infinity which pierces the night of ignorance, an incarnate divine Desire which is out to transform the vital or desire-self and the body of man, and love, which is the depth of being itself. There is a yearning in the abyss of Nature, sobbing for the redemption of all this inconscience and this universe. But in the heart of this very yearning of the Abyss exists Love. It is itself the redeemer—for it is the fire-passion of Grace. The poet believes that Love is going to transform earth into heaven some day. The transformation of man is also going to be total, for his heart, his mind and intellect, his will and his desire-self and body are on the anvil.

It will be noticed that the poet's thought, though it is substantial enough for a poem of this size, is unobtrusive. It is transparent to the poet's attitudes and vision and primacy is given to them.

The imagery has its own subtlety, richness and individuality so as to be a proper vehicle of this substance. The rose of bliss is pictured as a 'vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven'. It is the passion-flower of the Nameless, having arisen out of the holocaust of the *Puruṣa* himself. Out of the Nameless, a mystical Name is due to arise—this world which is going to be heaven and is a bud as yet. But the rose of bliss will leap up like a seven-tongued flame and achieve the transformation. The rose of light blooms on the summits of being and is the sun on its timeless head. It is a golden mystery, a divine guest that comes to man at the moment of truth-revelation. Like Bliss, Power, divine Desire and Love, Light also is there in man. But it reveals itself to him in his moments of exaltation.

The rose of power is a damask force and red icon with a diamond halo, not a vermilion stain like the rose of bliss, nor a golden mystery like the rose of light. The rose of life is purple and crowded with petals. It is the lyre of colours, not merely seven-tinged. The rose of love has a ruby depth. It is like a blush of rapture on the face of eternity. This last is a most marvellous image, not only for colour but for the very idea of love. Most of these images, except the one about the blush, which is a simile, are metaphors. The five roses are archetypal symbols. But they are all of them the one Rose also, as the title goes—the Rose of God. Each stanza begins with 'Rose of God'. One may say that, if the symbols have been produced by a vast vision, the rush of imagery reminds one of intense as well as illuminated vision.

The poem is written in four-lined stanzas with trisyllabic feet predominating in the lines. If a line contains five feet, the line that rhymes with it also contains five. If it contains six, the rhyming line also contains six. The interpersal of five feet rhyming couplets with Alexandrine rhyming couplets gives a striking musical fluidity to the lines. They are beautifully rhymed though the rhymes are mostly traditional. Only the last rhyme *abyss-kiss* lacks the beauty of the other rhymes in the poem.

The language of the poem follows an interesting pattern. It resolves itself, in each stanza, into the language of address (Rose of God,...red icon of might,···fire-passion of Grace!), the language of supplication (Leap up in our heart...Live in the mind...Transform the body...Make earth the home...), the language of collocations minted unforgettably for describing each Rose (vermilion stain...Sun on the head of the timeless...Image of Immortality...colour's lyre!...ruby depth of all being...) and the language of phrases and clauses describing the Roses (seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven...with the diamond halo piercing the night!...like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face...). A phrase is used only once outside this context, when the body of the mortal is referred to : 'like a sweet and magical rhyme'. A clause is used to descrbe Nature's yearning : 'from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss'. Otherwise all the

concentration of the language is on the address, the supplication and the description of the Rose in unforgettable collocations.

The vocabulary of the poem consists entierely of 'poetical' words. No other group of words is represented. This is quite a feat. There are very few poets who have depended mostly on poetical words and not been the victims of their words. Poetical words betray their masters and turn them into minor poets unless they know how to ride them hard. Swinburne, in his best poems, achieves mastery with poetical words. Tennyson's worst enemies were pretty words, just as the worst enemies of Browning were the colloquialisms and harsh and inconsequential words that he used.

We have set forth the nature of the contents of the centre and all the concentric circles including language which is the outermost of these circles. It should be possible now to give an adequate description of the style of the poem.

Each one of the elements analysed above points to *ojas*, *udāratā* and *śleṣa* as the *guṇas* or excellences of the style of this poem.

R. S. Pathak

VAKROKTI AND THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

There has been a marked awareness of the language of poetry in recent decades. Not only poets and critics but also linguists, philosophers and stylisticians have become conscious of the creative use of language in poetry. Consequently, formal features of poetry are receiving much needed attention. The study of poetic language has taken several directions in the West—from biographical to formalistic criticism. It has also been influenced by the postulates of linguists like F. de Saussure and Noam Chomsky, but they have devoted little direct attention to the special problems of the language of poetry. The recent interest in metaphorical language evinced in the field of philosophy of language and the imminent development of a formal semantic theory of language have suggested some more ways of studying the langnage of poetry. The work of such philosophers as Langer and Black and that of literary critics as Brook-Rose and Wheelwright indicates the direction that this study is likely to follow in the Western world. A really comprehensive understanding of the creative use of language in poetry, however, demands a more sound theoretical base. As Cowl points out, 'The study of poetry and criticism becomes more fruitful when associated with the study of literary theory......The study of poetry and of poetical criticism divorced of theory is at best unscientific'.[1] A sensible way out in the Indian context seems to be the exploration of certain crucial areas of intersection between the Indian and Western theories and standpoints on the response to poetry with a view to shedding significant light on some prominent problems pertaining to poetry.

It is remarkable that Indian poeticians were genuinely aware of some of these issues which are relevant to any discussion of the language of poetry. They have made several exploratory, but penetrating, contributions on many issues having a distinct bearing on poetry and poetic expression that still confront

modern scholars. Thomas Munro writes :

> ...from the earliest historic times, Oriental philosophers, rulers, priests and diviners were meditating on problems much like those which challenged Western mind. Indian...sages were meditating on arts and their potential values for man about the same time that Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle were doing so in the West...A comparision of Eastern and Western thought shows many surprising resemblances.[1a]

A study of Sanskrit poetics from Bharata (5th century B.C.) to Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha (17th century A. D.) will bear witness to the existence of a highly developed poetics in ancient India, with a rigorous scientific method for description and analysis of the expressive resources of language. The theoretical formulations of Indian poeticians may at times appear to be less rigorous and satisfactory by current standards, but they can enlighten the modern mind on a number of issues pertaining to poetic creation. Although Indian scholars did not use the terminology of modern criticism, linguistics and stylistics, they seem to have gone far in this area, and in certain respects their approach emerges as more comprehensive and striking than that of their Western counterparts. 'It cannot be maintained,' remarks S.K. De, 'that these theorists have said the last word on the subject, or said it (always) clearly or consistently; but they have certainly dealt with some of its fundamental aspects very ably.'[2] Some issues suggested by them have been taken up for fuller treatment by Western scholars in modern times.

Poetics is one of the three main fields of knowledge in which Indian scholarship has made significant contributions, the other two being grammar and philosophy. Unlike the Indian systems of philosophy and grammar, however, Indian poetics and its tenets have not been properly appreciated in the West. It has 'never received the acclaim accorded in the West to ancient Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature'.[3] The insights of Sanskrit poetics have remained unexplored owing to grave obstacles to communication. Its treatises are written in a terse and difficult style and bristle with linguistic technicalities.

Their wealth of details, mystical dross, quaint terminology and abstruse discussions would create almost insuperable barriers to an uninitiated reader. A careful perusal of Sanskrit poetics, however, after weeding out all inessential details, scholastic niceties, worn-out observations and unnecessary technicalities enmeshed in a dense opaque diction, will reveal profound foundations of Indian views on various aspects of poetic creativity and experience. Taken as a whole, Indian poetics is far more profound than a system of rhetoric, and in its highest reach it soars into aesthetics and linguistic philosophy. The field of poetics, as it developed in India, is full of logical, philosophical, linguistic, epistemological and metaphysical problems, a systematic study of which is most likely to unfold new vistas of knowledge.

Indian poetics presents a most fascinating and exciting area of study and research. Munro speaks very highly of the 'comprehensive, thorough and systematic' point of view enshrined in it. The great works produced by Indian scholars, he says, bear witness to 'the will and ability to develop a certain aesthetic theory in great detail, relating it to a metaphysical world-view on the one hand, and to a considerable amount of empirical data on the other'. Their conclusions are undoubtedly the outcome of a 'long, close professional observation and experience of art'.[4] Indian thinkers laid down excellent standards of literary taste and formulated an accurate theory of poetic expression. Most of their findings, which reached their apex in the works of scholars like Ānandavardhana, Kuntaka and Abhinavagupta, are 'still valid today and(are)even relatively novel to Western thought'.[5] A carful perusal of Sanskrit poetics would prove to any one 'not merely the great advances made by Indian aesthetics in relation to Aristotle but its amazing modernity and unparallelled adequacy in the midst of the chaos of modern critical theories'.[6] It is worth remembering that the validity and usefulness of Indian poetics has been realized by a scholar of the standing and repute of René Wellek, himself an able practitioner of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, who feels that comparative studies should ideally include the aesthetic deliberations of the Orients also.[7] Philip Rawson is also convinced that Indian scholars' formulations

would extend the 'conceptual armoury' of Western critics.[8] Speaking at the Annual Conference of the British Society of Aesthetics, held in September 1966, he remarked:

> In the field of aesthetics...a great series of thinkers who lived in India and wrote in Sanskrit between about the fourth century A.D. and the thirteenth have put up many ideas which *must* be brought into our present-day debates on art.

One of the favourite themes with Indian scholars has been poetic language, its beauty and effectiveness. As Krishnamoorthy observes, 'the whole field of Sanskrit *alaṅkāraśāstra* or poetics may be regarded as one continued attempt to unravel the mystery of beauty in poetic language'.[9] That the ancient Indian thinkers had their own distinctive concept of poetic language is evident from their theory of *vakrokti.* Talking of the achievements of Kuntaka, the greatest exponent of the theory of *vakrokti,* Krishnamoorthy holds that his basic postulates 'can find many echoes in modern aesthetic theories'.[10] The concept of *vakrokti* can be profitably considered in relation to the western concepts of oblique style and linguistic dislocation. Furthermore, Kuntaka's views offer the most striking similarities with modern Western analytic criticism. This is one of those areas where the affinities of the Indian thought and the European thinking are clearly discerniable. An attempt will be made to consider briefly the nature and scope of *vakrokti* as spelt out by Indian thinkers and to suggest some of the ways in which it can be made use of to supplement modern thinking on the language of poetry.

II

The Indian theory of *vakrokti* shows a remarkable divergence of conception and treatment. The theory developed in the works of scholars like Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, Vāmana, Kuntaka, Abhinavagupta, and Bhoja on the one hand, and those of Rudraṭa, Mammaṭa and their followers on the other. *Vakrokti* literally means a crooked or indirect speech. In its wider sense, it consists of strikingness of expression. Raghavan defines *vakrokti* as a 'striking, deviating expression'.[11] It would be a monstrosity, writes Kuppuswami Sastri, to translate the term *vakrokti* as

'eccentric expression'. 'In a simple way', he comments, 'it may be understood as deviation in expression from the commonplace. This deviation may be due to various causes, but when the deviation is effective, it is termed *vakrokti*.'[12] *Vakrokti*, as conceived by Indian thinkers, is nothing less than the basal principle of poetic language. Gnoli calls it 'the curved or obliqe diction, peculiar to poetic language'.[13] Another essential characteristic of *vakrokti* has been pointed out by S.K. De. According to him, the term refers to 'a kind of heightened expression'.[14] The Indian theory of *vakrokti* emerges as a viable theory of the language of poetry. Indian thinking on poetry which is largely centred around language, regards poetry primarily as a linguistic organization, and, according to it, the language of poetry is *vakrokti par excellence*.

The detailed treatment of *vakrokti* is found in the works of Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, Kuntaka and Bhoja. However, 'the concept of *vakrokti* must be older than Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin, for we find it used with settled connotation in the works of both writers'.[15] Some scholars are of the view that the earliest traces of the theory of *vakrokti* can be found in Bharata's treatment of *lakṣaṇas* in his *Nāṭyaśāstra*.[16] Bhāmaha, however, is the first scholar to assign a prominent place to *vakrokti*. To him it is the distinguishing trait of the language of poetry (I/30).[17] It transgresses all mundane experience *(lokātikrāntagocaram)* and is considered desirable for the purpose of adorning poetic speech (II/81; I/36; V/66). Bhāmaha identifies *vakrokti* to *atiśayokti* (Hyperbole) and maintains:

> It underlies all figures of speech, imparting beauty to them, and needs assiduously to be cultivated by poets, for there can be no figure for want of it (II/85).[18]

Bhāmaha thus employs *vakrokti* as a collective designation for all poetic figures. It is *vakrokti* that is responsible for imparting distinguishing characteristics to them.

The next important discussion of *vakrokti* is by Daṇḍin. He, too, uses the term as a collective designation for all figures except *svabhāvokti* (Nature Description), which he calls the first figure of

speech (II/8). Following his predecessors, he regards *atiśāyokti* as 'the one mainstay of all figures' (II/220). Daṇḍin's characterization of *atiśayokti* applies to his *vakrokti* as well:

> The poet's desire to describe something peculiar transcending the bounds of commonality gives rise to *atiśayokti*, whlch is the best of poetic figures (II/214).[19]

Daṇḍin also holds that *śleṣa* (paronomasia) is the beautifying factor in all oblique modes of expression (II/363).[20] When he distinguishes literary compositions in terms of *vakrokti* and *svabhāvokti* and when he says that it is *śleṣa* that adds charm in *vakrokti*, Daṇḍin seems to be somewhat minimizing the scope of Bhāmaha's *vakrokti*. Vāmana also had a rather narrow concept of *vakrokti*. He conceives of it as a peculiar mode of metaphorical expression based on similarity. He says: 'Where a metaphor is based on similitude, we have *vakrokti*' (*sādṛśyāllakṣaṇā vakroktiḥ* IV.iii/8). It has, however, been maintained that Vāmana has not ignored *vakrokti* in its larger sense and that 'particularity' in his definition of *rīti* (Style) is not very differnt from *vakrokti*.[21]

The other important Sanskrit poeticians who made a reference to the concept of *vakrokti* are Ānandavardhana and Rājaśekhara. Although Ānandavardhana does not treat it separately, he seems to be fully conversant with the concept of *vakrokti* enunciated by Bhāmaha. While introducing *dhvani* (suggestion) in the very beginning of his great work, he quotes a verse by the poet Manoratha which makes a clear reference to *vakrokti*. Ānandavardhana would not accept it as something more than an expressed figure *(vācālaṇkāra;* II/21). In the Third Chapter of his *Dhvanyāloka*, however, he seems to lend further support to Bhāmaha's views on *vakrokti*. Citing Bhāmaha (II/85), he holds that strikingness in meaning is discernible in every poetic figure and that *atiśayokti* pervades and beautifies all figures, which, in fact, are various modifications of it.[22]

Rājaśekhara, too, upholds indirection in poetry. He quotes a statement of his wife's in support of his basic postulates. His wife Avantisundarī maintained: 'There is no constant nature of things, so far as poetry is concerned, for the poet's artistic mind

and his ingenious terms of expressions conceive of things in all sorts of ways'.[23] This view can be compared to Rājaśekhara's own pronouncements that in poetry there is no question of things being true or untrue and that what really matters is the poet's way of presentation of verisimilitude.[24] P.V. Kane opines that Kuntaka's definition of poetry 'seems to be borrowed from someone like Avantisundarı'.[25] It may also be pointed out that in the Prologue to his *Karpūramañjarī* Rājaśekhara defines poetry as a particular kind of speech *(uktiviśeṣaḥ kāvyam)*. He maintains: 'Neither is the idea the point, nor the mere word, but the manner of expressing that idea in words is the thing that makes for poetry'.[26] Rājaśekhara's treatment of *vakrokti* is lost, but it is just possible that he has called *vakrokti* by the name of *auktika* (*e.i.*, pertaining to a statement or saying).[27]

The concept of *vakrokti* was taken up for a detailed discussion by Kuntaka, Bhoja and Abhinavagupta, who belonged to the same age. Abhinavagupta, the great commentator of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Dhvanyāloka*, 'was distinctly aware of the concept of *vakraktva*', *i.e.*, obliquity.[28] He equates it with a 'consummate composition' and holds it to be the generic quality inhering in all figures.[29] Again, he remarks:

> There is, in fact, the strikingness in words and meanings and it consists in their transgressing the ordinary. This very quality characterizes poetic figures, and it is a heightened form of expression that distinguishes poetic speech from the matter-of-fact speech of everyday life. *Atiśayokti* is found in all figures.[30]

In his *Abhinavabhāratī* he maintains :

> *Vakrokti* which lends strikingness to the body of poetry and is the essence of all poetic figures, is referred to [by Bharata] by the term *laṣkaṇa*.[31]

Abhinavagupta treats *vakrokti* as 'a delectable, singular meaning'. According to him, it 'involves hyperbolical expression by virtue of figures and attributes' (*guṇa)*.[32] The fresh interpretation given to Bharata's *lakṣaṇas* by Abhinavagupta shows the affinity between the latter's pronouncements and those of Kuntaka.

It was Kuntaka who considered *vakrokti* in a very detailed way, delineating its nature, types and significance in poetry. At the very outset of his *Vakroktijīvita*, he states that his object in writing a fresh treatise on poetics was 'to establish the idea of strikingness which causes extraordinary charm in poetry'.[33] He conceives of *vakrokti*, which he holds to be the life-breath of poetry *(vakroktiḥ kāvyajīvitam)*, as a certain charming deviation from the ordinary mode of expression of ideas. He further describes *vakrokti* as a 'striking denotation *(vicitrā abhidhā)*—a striking mode of expression depending on the peculiar turn given to it by the skill of the poet. The language of poetry, says he, is different from the current mode of speech as also from the established manner of expressing which we find in scientific treatises and the like.[34] Kuntaka defines poetry as 'the synthesis of word and meaning, embodied in an oblique expression, that constitutes the creative process and is a source of aesthetic delight to a connoisseur.'[35] Explaining his theoretical position, he further remarks:

> Both words and meanings are to be embellished, and their embellishment lies in their obliqueness. *Vakrokti* is an ingenious utterance peculiar to poetry and is distinct from popular usage. It is a clever turn of speech, witty and startling in effect.[36]

Daṇḍin, before Kuntaka, had said that poetry is embellished words communicating the desired meaning.[37] Kuntaka, however, would not endorse Daṇḍin's view. To him mere word, howsoever charming it may be, or mere idea conveyed by it does not constitute poetry (*na śabdasyaiva ramaṇīyatā-viśiṣṭasya kevalasya kāvyatvam, nāpi arthasyeti);* what makes them into poetry is the presence of strikingness originating from *vakrokti*.[38] An idea insufficiently expressed is 'dead' *(mṛtakalpa)*, says he, and an expression devoid of idea or expressing something other than the intended idea is 'diseased' *(vyādhibhūta)*.[39] The relationship between matter and manner in poetry is aptly describad by Kuntaka as a mutual tension or rivalry *(parasparaspardhitva)*—a constant challenge or provocation to each to hold its own without yielding to the other.[40] Kuntaka also maintains that crucial

role in poetic expression is played by an act of imagination on the part of the poet *(kavi-vyāpāra)*. By recognising the significance of the poet's imagination in poetic creation, he has established the theory of *vakrokti* on a sound aesthetic footing.

Bhoja also discussed *vakrokti* in his works. He used the term in three different senses: (i) the poetic expression in general; (ii) the figures of speech beginning with *upamā* (Simile); and (iii) one of the varieties of the verbal figure called *vākovākya*. Though the use of *vakrokti* in Bhoja in its large sense is infrequent, he does use it in the comprehensive sense of poetic expression and the most distinguishing mark of poetry. Raghavan does not admit Bhoja's familiarity with Kuntaka's work.[41] However, some knowledge of the latter's theory on the part of Bhoja cannot be ruled out.[42] There is a marked similarity between Bhoja's and Kuntaka's concepts of *vakrokti*. Defining poetry, Bhoja writes:

> The non-oblique language used in sciences and common usage is non-poetic expression. The oblique expression, like *arthavāda* etc., is poetry.[43]

Bhoja thus defines poetry in terms of *vakrokti*. He designates it as an extraordinary, rounded expression *(viśiṣṭā bhaṇiti)*.[44] At times he seems to be working out a reconciliation between *dhvani* and *vakrokti*. He assigns to *dhvani* a supreme position in poetry *(dhvanireva kāvye)* and at the same time emphasizes the significance of *vakrokti*, without which poetry will be mere *vacas*.

Not all Indian poeticians, however, accepted *vakrokti* in its comprehensive sense. In the history of *vakrokti* it was Rudraṭa who first described it as a verbal figure *(śabdālaṅkāra)*. It is from Rudraṭa, again, that the two well-known types of *vakrokti*—*śleṣa vakrokti* and *kāku-vakrokti* originated. Later scholars accepted his definition of *vakrokti*.[45] Though Kuntaka's concept of *vakrokti* was not endorsed by later writers, his views regarding strikingness as the central characteristic of the language of poetry were widely upheld. Ruyyaka, for example, regards a poetic figure as a particular form of speech and thinks a peculiar turn of expression as a specific differentia in poetic speech. Commenting on the figure *anumāna* (Inference), he affirms that it cannot

be distinguished from the logician's inference unless there is a particular charm of *(vicchitti)* depending on the sense and that the special charm of this figure arises from a peculiar beauty attached to it by the forcible utterance of the poet.[46] Mammaṭa, to cite one more example, is also of the opinion that charmingness of expression can accrue out of figures even where there is no *rasa*.[47] He goes to the extent of maintaining that 'a figure is nothing else than strikingness itself' *(vaicitryaṁ ca alaṅkāraḥ)*.[48] To him the life-blood of poetry is constituted by a hyperbolical expression *(prāṇatvenāvatiṣṭhate)*. The views of Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha are clearer still. He, too, looks upon a figure as a specialized expression and holds strikingness to be the generic trait of all figures.[49] This strikingness, he adds, results from the charm brought about by the poet's imagination.[50]

Strikingness, highlighted by Sanskrit poeticians, serves thus as the substratum for all poetic expression. 'Wonder,' arising out of strikingness, says Raghavan, 'is an invariable element in all enjoyment, mundane or artistic. In art and literature, the element of surprise, extraordinariness, wonder is present everywhere.'[51] It may be pointed out that Bharata himself had maintained that poetry has to be in the form of a cow's tail, bushy at the end, with a crowd of surprises.[52] Some modern critics have also emphasized, in their own ways, the role and relevance of wonder in poetry. T.S. Eliot, for example, is of the view that 'The element of surprise (is) so essential to poetry'.[53] The idea regarding strikingness of poetic expression keeps on appearing variously in Indian poetics. It emerges in the form of Bharata's *lakṣaṇa*, Vāmana's *vandha-gumpha*, Ānandavardhana's *bandhacchāyā* and *uktivaicitrya* and Rājaśekhara's *bhaṇiti-vaicitrya*. These ideas were there in an inchoate form and it fell to the lot of Kuntaka to treat them in a systematic and exhaustive way.

Kuntaka is fully convinced that it is the expressional deviation or strikingness that is *sine qua non* of poetry. His theory of *vakrokti* presents a cogent and detailed exposition of this aspect. Notwithstanding its 'somewhat quaint nomenclature',[54] the originality and great literary acumen of Kuntaka's work are undeniable. He deserves due recognition for formulating 'a significant theory

of poetic expression.'[55] Kuntaka's theory, it has been said, is 'not so much a system of thought, as a training of the attention of "seeing" poetry'; it is, in fact, the the very 'nature and principle of poetry' itself.[56] Its value as a comprehensive philosophy of the language of poetry can hardly be overemphasized.

III

Poetry embodies a significant aspect of human experience in the stylized linguistic pattern. Poetic language represents the most conscious use of language. Paul Valéry calls it 'a language within a language' and 'an art of language'.[57] Poetry, according to Matthew Arnold, is the most delightful and perfect form of utterance that human words can reach—'thought and art in one, and is 'nothing less than the most perfect speech of man'.[58] The poet keeps on annexing new verbal domains by making what T. S. Eliot calls 'raid on the inarticulate'. The language of poetry is, in other words, the 'language at full stretch'.[59] It it recognizably the language used in everyday affairs but it is turned, as it were, inside out. The poet makes words and their combinations serve more than their ordinary function. As an instrument of verbal communication, 'poetry exploits more consistently the full potential of the language'.[60] Indian tradition attaches considerable importance to the expression element in poetry. The poet, according to it, is the one who 'sees' and is able to express in proper words what he has 'seen'. Bhaṭṭa Tauta, Abhinavagupta's teacher, makes a pertinent observation in his *Kāvyakautuka* when he maintains that the poet must have the two-fold endowment of vision and expression :

> It has been said that no non-seer can be deservingly called a poet, and one is a seer only by virtue of his vision. Vision is the power of disclosing intuitively the reality underlying the manifold materials in the world and their aspects. To be termed a 'poet' it is not enough to be possessed of this vision of reality. But in everyday speech the world accords that title to him alone who possesses vision as well as expression. Thus, though the first poet (i.e. Vālmīki)

> was highly gifted with a clear vision, he was not hailed as a poet by people until he embodied it in a poetical work.[61]

As would be clear from Indian poeticians' theoretical position, a certain obliqueness or indirection is the most distinguishing characteristic of the language of poetry. Talking about the two kinds of poetry, Tillyard remarks : 'The distinction between "direct" and "oblique" poetry is not new, and must be familiar enough in some form or another, but as an important initial criterion I doubt if it has been clearly formulated or consciously applied to critical practice'.[62] It is true that the concept of oblique poetry (i.e., *vakrokti*) has not been 'clearly formulated' by Western scholars. Nor has it been 'consciouly applied to critical practice' by them, as has been done by Indian poeticians. Some Western critics nevertheless do evince an awareness of obliquity in the language of poetry. It is neither possible nor desirable to give here a detailed historical account of their formulations. But some representative viewpoints may be placed alongside of Indian poeticians' theory of *vakrokti* with a view to deciphering its scope and potential for acceptance as a viable theory of poetic expression.

Aristotle is undoubtedly the first western scholar to accept the full significance of obliquity in poetry. The obliquity rejected by Plato has been accepted by him as the very essence of poetry. 'The poet,' he maintains, 'should prefer probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities.'[63] More than once does he underscore the essentiality of obliquity or indirection in poetry. That diction, says he, 'is lofty and raised above the commonplace which employs unusual words', unusual words being 'strange (or rare) words, metaphorical, lengthened—anything, in short, that differs from the normal idiom'. Poetic vocabulary, he further states, should not be made up of strange or rare words alone. But 'by deviating in exceptional case from the normal idiom, the language will gain distinction'.[64] Aristotle discusses style in his *Rhetoric* in greater detail than in his *Poetics* :

> It is therefore well to give to everyday speech an unfamiliar air : people like what strikes them, and

> are struck by what is out of the way. In verse such effects are common, and there they are fitting : the persons and things there spoken of are comparatively remote from ordinary life.[65]

Aristotle's partiality for obliquity is also evident from the value he attaches to metaphor, which he calls 'the greatest thing' in poetry—'the mark of genius'.[66] Metaphor imparts liveliness by surprising the listener; like a well-constructed riddle, it attracts by conveying a new idea different from the one the hearer expected.[67]

In the entire Graeco-Roman tradition, no critic attaches so much importance to obliquity as Longinus. He forcefully maintains that 'The effect of elevated language upon an audience is not persuasion but transport'.[68] He expounds in detail the structure of speech and all the devices leading to the sublime. Expressing his views on exaltedness of language in poetry, he remarks :

> The Sublime consists in a certain loftiness and consummateness of language, and it is by this and this only that the greatest poets and prose-writers have won pre-eminence and lasting fame.[69]

He goes on to say towards the end of his work that in poetry 'we look for something transcending the human'.[70] He calls it in a different context 'the extraordinary, the great, and the beautiful'.[71]

Among Continental critics, the great Italian poet and critic Dante holds that great poets are those 'who have written poetry with stately language'.[72] In his letter to Can Grande della Scala he mentions two kinds of meaning—literal and metaphorical. 'The first meaning is the one obtained through the things signified by the the letter.'[73] The higher kind of poetry, says he, 'speaks in an elevated and sublime fashion'.[74] Croce designates artistic beauty in poetry as a 'verbal paradox'. To him 'the aesthetic fact...is form, and nothing but form'.[75] He remarks :

> Language is a perpetual creation. What has been linguistically expressed is not repeated, save by reproduction of what has already been produced.

> The ever-new impressions give rise to continuous changes of sound and meaning, that is, to ever-new expressions. To seek the model language is to seek the immobility of motion.[76]

Certain German critics like Lessing, Goethe and Schiller reaffirmed the poet's freedom and independence of art. Goethe represents their views when he maintains: 'Individuality of expression is the beginning and end of all art'.[77] The French symbolists even more unabashedly celebrate indirection, vagueness or obliquity as the soul of poetry, In poetry, as Valery suggests, the poet tries to clear up the verbal situation through 'the special means of articulate language.'[78] Mallarmé confided to his friend Henri Cazalis that his aim was 'to write original poetry'—'great, mysterious poetry'.[79] He busied himself therefore with 'inventing a new language' which would 'describe not the object itself, but the effect it produces'.[80] In the hands of common people, language is used with utmost 'directness', but in the hands of a poet it acquires full efficacy: 'it is turned, above all, to dream and song'[31] 'Art has its own mysteries,' says Mallarmé, and it is heightened by its medium.[82] Rimbaud's ideas on poetry are found in the two *voyant* letters and the *Alchimie du Verbe* section of his *Une Saison en Enfer*. The poet's role, says he, is to express his discoveries in a new language.[83] He insists that poetry is a special form of language with its own unique function to perform.

The English literary criticism exemplifies a ceaseless story of conformity to tradition and revolt. The Renaissance brought about a new awareness of literary language. Despite a high regard for the tradition, it evinced a rare eagerness to experiment with the new. In his *Apology* Sidney declares that 'there are many misteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written darkly, lest by prophane wits, it should be absurd'.[84] In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the critical scene in Europe was dominated by Neoclassicism, the fundamental stand of which was a blind following of classics. Critics like Addison, however, seem to be appreciating the necessity of providing a little more elbow room for poets 'who want strength of Genius to make a Thought shine in his own natural Beauties'.[85] By the

end of the eighteenth century, the literary climate began to change. Edward Young, in his *Conjectures on Original Composition*, maintains that the miraculous results of genius are well within the reach of the individual poet, provided he frees himself from the encumbrances of custom and outworn rule. An 'original' poet, according to him, tries to 'extend the republic of letters, and add a new province to its dominion'. This he does by crossing 'all public roads into fresh untrodden ground.'[86]

Imaginative way of self-expression probably never received so much attention as it did during the Romantic Revival. The entire age was, as Theodore Watts-Duntan puts it, 'the Renascence of wonder'. Poets busied themselves with the removal of 'the film of familiarity' from the creative scene. Through the instrumentality of the 'esemplastic' imagination, a genuine poet, said Coleridge, strives at and attains a rare 'balance or reconciliation of opposites or discordant qualities, ...the sense of novelty and of freshness, wtih old and familiar objects'[87] Shelley also feels that owing to its creative powers, language in poetry can work wonders. Such is its impact that 'Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar'.[88] Keats, too, advocated the ideals of 'fine excess' and 'singularity' and, like Shelley, himself tried to 'load every rift with ore'. Though the later nineteenth century produced some excellent oblique poetry like that of the early Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne, because of the impact of the *Zietgiest*, most poets became 'chroniclers' of contemporary life and tried to write the 'poem of the age',[89] which was to be 'the *only* Poem to be undertaken by anyone who was a poet at all'.[90] Consequently, oblique poetry ceased during this age to be as popular as it was during the Romantic Revival.

The Modern Age, however, has seen a pervasive revival of oblique poetry. T. S. Eliot once said that modern poetry must be difficult because of the discontinuities of modern culture. Williams also feels that the poetry of the post-Einsteinian world, where all order is questioned, is bound to be oblique. The complexity of most modern poetry results from the fact that

individual words and pharases are very often startlingly juxtaposed and poetic language is dislocated into fresh meanings. As Eliot observes.

> When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary....in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.[91]

To express their sensibility adequately and to compel heterogeneous materials into unity poets have to 'find the verbal equivalents for states of mind and feeling'. In most modern poetry the structure is so loose and the pattern so problematical that it qualifies to be accepted as genuine oblique poetry. Eliot says that to write oblique or 'indirect' poetry one has no option but to 'dislocate' language.[92] Other critics have also drawn attention to the medium of modern poetry, which they have called a 'mandarin' language.[93] It is 'the complex and evasive spirit of modernity', they say, that expresses itself 'by oblique means'.[94] According to Isaacs, the most distinguishing quality of the modern poetry is its 'suggestive indefiniteness'.[95] Elizabeth Drew makes it a point to contrast the 'too facile and superficial technique of Victorians' with the 'oblique approach' of modern poets like Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot.[95] Pound and Eliot were largely responsible for popularizing the oblique mode of modern poetry, which was practised and perfected by a host of poets led by them.

The composition of a poem, according to most modern poets, is akin to solving a crossword puzzle. W. B. Yeats, in his well known essay on 'The Symbolism of Poetry', speaks of 'innumerable meanings'.[97] Again, in his letter of 8 September 1935 addressed to Dorothy Wellesley he says that poetry, unlike prose, 'comes right with a click like a closing box'.[98] This is so precisely bccause of language. Poetic meanings expressed through language are 'like a set of concentric circles, of wider and wider scope'. The poet's feeling, Kenneth Burke opines, has got to be 'individuated'.[99] Another poet and critic, Herbert Read, beiieves that 'Poetry is, properly speaking, a trans-

cendental quality—a sudden transformation which words assume under a particular influence'.[100] No western critic has discussed oblique poetry more consistently than Tillyard. He frankly maintains : 'All poetry is more or less oblique : there is no direct poetry'.[101] Tillyard's obliquity is reminiscent of indirection. As Bateson points out, 'A word's connotation is as much a part of its meaning as its denotation'.[102] Bayley also upholds obliquity, which he would define as 'casting the net of reference in a wider and more subjective art.'[103] These various views are supportive of obliquity in poetry.

Certain leading American poets also recognized the value of indirection in poetry. In Poe beauty and strangeness are identical. In his letter to B––,published as the perface to his *Poems, 1831*, he speaks of poetry as 'presenting perceptible images ......with indefinite sensations.' Poe points out 'radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation' and is convinced that it is impossible 'to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth'.[104] He further remarks in his *Marginalia* that the 'suggestive indefiniteness of meaning' brings about 'a definiteness of vague and therefore a spiritual effect'. This very indefiniteness has been practised and recommended by Whitman. Emphasizing the distinctive qualities of his *Leaves of Grass*, he remarks in 'A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads' : The word I myself put primarily for the description of them as they stand at last is the word Suggestiveness'. Moreover. quite a few of Robert Frost's poems subscribe to the oblique mode. Poetry, according to him, provides 'the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another', each poem being 'a daily walk with a cliff's edge prospect'. Commenting on his own poetry, Frost wrote to an acquaintance : 'My poems are all set to trip the reader head foremost into the boundless......It is my intention we are speaking of—my innate mischievousness.' As is clear from the above discussion, critics and poets on both sides of the Atlantic practised and championed oblique poetry.

Even more conspicuous correspondences can be noticed between the New Critics' formulations and *vakrokti*. The modern

vogue of 'paradox' and 'irony' as language of poetry has imparted a new significance to *vakrokti.* In its literal as well as extensive meaning, *vakrokti* closely approaches 'irony', 'ambiguity', 'gesture', and 'tension'. It is worth pointing out that the modern critical creed of the search for irony, paradox and ambiguity was anticipated in India hundreds of years ago. The elevation of 'irony' from its status as a trope to that of a basic structural principle in poetry adds, by highlighting additional associations, further comprehensiveness to the theory of *vakrokti.* 'The language of poetry,' writes Cleanth Brooks, 'is the language of paradox', which springs 'from the very nature of the poet's language'.[105] Brooks's concept of 'irony' and 'paradox' are interlinked. He clearly points out that 'the same principle that insures the presence of irony in so many of our great poems also accounts for the fact that so many of them seem to be built around paradoxes'.[106] The method, says he, is 'an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it'.[107] The phenomenon of multiple implications in poetry has been referred to by terms like ambiguity, polysemy, plurisignation and so on. Empson defines ambiguity as the product of 'any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language.'[108] Allen Tate's concept of 'tension' and Blackmur's views on poetic language as 'gesture' also come very near to Kuntaka's. 'The meaning of poetry,' Tate maintains, 'is its "tension", the full organized body of all the extension and intention that we can find in it.'[109] 'Extension' and 'intension' refer to denotation and connotation respectively. The poet gives up the language of denotation and relies upon 'a continually thinning flux of peripheral connotations'. All good poetry is nothing but 'a unity of all the meaning from the furtherest extremes of intension and extension'.[110] According to Blackmur, the language of poetry can best be described as 'gesture'. 'When the language of words fails,' writes he, 'we resort to the language of gesture'.[111] He further says : 'Gesture is that meaningfulness which is moving, in every sense of that word : what moves the words and what moves us'.[112] All these views can be considered in relation to the Indian theory of *vakrokti.*

One conclusion can very easily be drawn from the above discussion : both Indian and western scholars are convinced that a certain obliqueness or indirection is the most distinguishing characteristic of the language of poetry. They all point out this very central aspect of poetic language. The Indian theory of *vakrokti* and the western critics' pronouncements should be viewed as complementary. The Indian concept of *vakrokti*, however, is far more comprehensive and convincing than the assertions of western critics. Even Tillyard's account of obliquity appears rather superficial when placed beside the treatments of Kuntaka and others. It has been said that the most 'provocative part' of Tillyard's exposition is the notion that the oblique meaning should be alien to the statement.[113] All good poetry is not oblique; there can be excellent poetry of statement. Moreover, owing to their inherent limitations resulting from their monistic approach, even the New Critics' postulates do not compare favourably with the Indian theory of *vakrokti*. William Righter is of the view that the New Critics' are not precisely explanatory coucepts and should not be taken seriously as additions to the technical vocabulary of criticism.[114] Though these concepts are not as multidimensional as *vakrokti*, their relevance to contemporary critical deliberations can hardly be ignored. Warburg says that 'the peculiar mode of saying constitutes, in fact, a peculiar mode of apprehension'.[115] No one has realised the truth of it better than Indian poeticians. By taking due congnizance of the connoisseur's reaction to a piece of poetry and by basing their theoretical edifice on the firm foundation of poetic activity, they have given a more convincing explanation of linguistic creativity and the nature and role of obliquity in poetry.

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17. yuktaṁ vakrasvabhāvoktyā sarvamevaitadiṣyate.

    Kāvyālaṅkāra, I/30.
18. saiṣā sarvaiva vakroktir anayārtho vibhāvyate/
    yatno'syāṁ kavinā kāryaḥ ko'laṅkāro'nayā vinā//

    Ibid., II/85.
19. vivakṣā yā viśeṣasya lokasīmātivartinī/
    asau atiśayoktiḥ syād alaṅkārottamā yathā//

    Kāvyādarśa, II/214.,
20. śleṣaḥ sarvāṣu puṣṇāti prāyo vakroktiṣu śriyam.

    Ibid., II/363.

21. Nagendra, *Bhāratīya Kāvyaśāstra kī Bhūmikā* (New Delhi, n. d.), pp. 188-89.
22. atiśayoktigarbhatā sarvālaṅkareṣu śakyakriyā... kathaṁ hyatiśayayogitā svaviṣayaucityena kriyamāṇā satī kāvye notkarṣamāvahet... tatrātiśayoktir yam alaṇkāram adhitiṣṭhati kavipratibhāvaśāt tasya cārutvātiśayayo'gonyasyatvatialaṅkāramātrataiveti sarvālaṅkāraśarīrasvīkaraṇayogatvenābhedopacārāt saiva sarvālaṅkārarupa, ityayam evārtho 'vagantavyaḥ.

   Dhvanyāloka, ed. Viśveśvara, p. 291.
23. Vaidagdhyabhaṇitibhangīnivedyaṁ vastuno rūpaṁ na niyatasvabhāvam iti avantisundarī. tadāha—

   vastusvabhāvo'tra kaveratantraṁ guṇāguṇāvuktivaśena kāvye/stuvannibadhnātyamṛtānśuminduṁ nindanstu doṣākaramāha dhurtaḥ//

   Kāvyamīmānsā, ed C.D. Dalal (GOI, 1935), p. 46.
24. nāsatyaṁ nāma kiñcana kāvye yastu stutyeṣvarthavādaḥ/ sa na paraṁ kavikarmaṇi śrutau ca śāstre ca loke ca//

   Ibid., p. 25.
25. *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (Delhi, 1861), p. 385.
26. arthaviśeṣāsta eva śabdāsta eva pariṇamanto'pi/ uktiviśeṣaḥ kāvyaṁ bhāṣā yā bhavatu sā bhavatu//
27. Hajari Prasad Dwivedi, *Hamārī Sāhityika Samasyāyen* (Patna, 1249), p. 147.
28. A Sankaran, *Some Aspects of Literary Ctiticism in Sanskrit* (Madras, 1960), p. 120.
29. vakroktiḥ utkṛṣṭā saṅghaṭanā tacchūnyam iti śabdārthaguṇānām. vakroktiśunyaśabdena sāmānyalakṣaṇabhāvena sarvālaṅkārabhāva ukta iti kecit.

   Dhvanyālokalocana, p. 47.
30. śabdasya hi vakratā arthasya ca vakratā lokottareṇa rūpeṇāvasthanam ityayamevāsāvalaṅkārasyātikāarabhāvaḥ, lokottarataiva ca atiśayaḥ tena atiśayoktiḥ sarvālaṅkārasāmānyam.

   Ibid., p. 1144.
31. samastārthālaṅkāravargasya bījabhūtāś camatkārāḥ kathāśarīravaicitryadāyino vakroktirūpā lakṣaṇaśabdena vyavahriyante.

   Abhinavabhāratī, p. 348.

32. guṇalaṅkāraireva yatra kathārūpā vakroktiratiśayitā tatra bhuṣaṇam.
Ibid., p. 349.
33. lokottaracamatkārivaicitryasiddhaye/
kāvyasyāyam alaṅkāraḥ ko'pyapūrvo vidhīyate//
Vakroktijīvita, I/2.
34. vakroktireva vaidagdhyabhaṅgī bhaṇitirucyate.
Ibid., I/10.
35. śabdārthau sahitau vakrakavivyāpāraśālini/
bandhe vyavasthitau kāvyaṁ tadvidāhlādakāriṇi//
Ibid., I/7.
36. ubhāvetāvalankāryau tayoḥ punaralankrtiḥ/
bhaṅgī vakroktireva vaidagdhyabhaṇitirucyate//
Ibid., I/10.
37. taiḥ śarīraṁ ca kāvyānām alaṅkārāśca darśitāḥ/
śarīaṁ tāvad iṣṭārthavyavacchinnā padāvalī//
Kāvyādarśa, I/10.
38. *Vakroktijīvita*, ed. S. K. De, I/7 Comm., p, 10.
39. *Ibid*,, p. 14.
40. sāhityam anayoḥ śobhāśālitaṁ prati kāpyasau/
anyūna atiriktatva manohāriṇi avasthitiḥ//
Ibid., I/17.
41. *Bhoja's Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, p. 117.
42. See Krishnamoorthy (ed.), *Vakroktijīvita* (Dharwar ed.), p. xxvii.
43. yad avakraṁ vacaḥ śāstre loke ca vaca eva tat/
vakraṁ yad arthavādādau tasya kāvyam iti smṛtiḥ//
Śṛṅgāraprakāśa, ed. Josyer, p. 221.
44. viśiṣṭā bhaṇitir yā syād uktiṁ tāṁ kavayo viduḥ/
Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa, II/56.
45. vakroktiḥ kāvyajīvitam iti vakroktijīvitakāroktam api parāstam, vakrokter alaṅkārarūpttvāt.
46. vicchittiviśeṣaś cātrārthāśrayanīyaḥ, anyathā tarkānumānāt kiṁ vailakṣaṇyam; praudhoktimātraniṣpannārthaniṣṭhatvena ca vicchittiviśeṣāśrayaṇāt cārutvam.
47. yatra tu nāsti rasas tatroktivaicitryamātraparyavasāyinaḥ.
Kāvyaprakāśa, VIII/2 Comm.
48. *Ibid.*, X/1 Comm.

49. alaṅkārāṇāṁ bhaṇitiviśeṣarūpatvam, camatkāritvaṁ ca alaṅkārasāmānyalakṣaṇaṁ prāptam eva.
Rasagaṅgādhara, (KM ed.), p. 424
50. alaṅkārāṅāṁ parasparavicchedasya vailakṣaṇyasya hetubhūtā jaṅyatāsaṅsargeṇa kāvyaniṣṭhā kavipratibhā, tajjanyatvaprayuktā camātkāritā vā vicchittiḥ.
Ibid., p. 466.
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60. J. Beaty and W. H. Matchett, *Poetry from Statement to Meaning* (New York, 1965), p. 9.
61. nānṛṣiḥ kavirityuktāṃ ṛṣiśca kila darśanāt/...
tathā hi darśane svacche nityepyādikaver muneḥ/
noditā kavitā loke yāvajjātā na varṇanā//
Quoted in Hemacandra, *Kāvyānuśāsana*, VIII, p. 379.
62. M. W. Tillyard, *Poetry Direct and Oblique* (London, 1948), pp. 9–10.
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V. Venkata Subbaiah

VAKROKTI AND MODES OF POETIC DEVIATION

Geoffrey Leech, in his eminently readable book, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetrv* (Oxford, 1979), feels that a creative writer may have to transcend the bounds of standard language to explore and communicate new areas of experience. But he points out, rather rightly, that this freedom granted to the creative artist has reached 'pathological degrees of abnormality' in some poets. He feels that deviations from the accepted norms of language, inevitable as they are in poetry, should not be 'too violent and too frequent.'

Dr. Leech classified linguistic deviation in poetry into eight types. They are :

Lexical Deviation; Grammatical Deviation; Phonological Deviation; Graphological Deviation; Semantic Deviation; Dialectal Deviation; Deviation of Register, and Historical Deviation.

He calls the first five main deviations and the last three ancillary deviations.

The concept of deviation, called *Vakrokti* in Indian aesthetics, is popularized by Kuntaka (9th Century A. D.) in his masterly treatise entitled *Vakrokti Jīvitam*. Though the concept existed even before, the distinction of formulating it into a system of literary criticism goes to Kuntaka. For Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin *Vakrokti* was only an *alaṁkāra,* a poetic embellishment. Kuntaka disagreeing with them, elevated it to greater heights, calling it 'the life of poetry' *(vakroktiḥ kāvya jīvitam).*

Vakrokti, according to Kuntaka, is a deviation from the established norms of language for the purpose of attaining a certain strikingness *(Vaichitrya)* or an imaginative turn of phrase or idea *(bhaṅgī bhaṇiti).* He feels that *Vakrokti* depends greatly upon the talent *(pratibhā)*and the craftsmanship *(kauśala)* of the poet. Daṇḍin divides poetry into two kinds—the one

written in the natural speech *(svabhāvokti)*[1] and the other written in the 'twisted' or oblique speech *(vakrokti)* and feels that the former is aesthetically more pleasing than the latter. But Kuntaka, disagreeing with him, says that the matter-of-fact speech fails to please the connoisseur of poetry *(sahṛdaya)* because it lacks *vaichitrya*, and states that the matter-of-fact speech is elevated to the status of poetry only when it is given a twist. According to him *vakroktimārga* in poetry is superior to *sukumāra mārga* which depends heavily on *svabhāvokti*. Kuntaka's theory of *vakrokti* can be summarized in the following *śloka* :

Śabdārthau sahitau vakra kavi vyāpāraśāliṇi,
Bandhé vyavasthitau kāvyam tadvidāhlādakāriṇī.[2]

'Poetry is the combination of sound and sense introduced in a linguistic composition that strikes with the strikingness of expression caused by the skill of the poet—the composition that imparts delight to the connoisseur.'[3]

Vakrokti, according to Kuntaka, embraces such basic theories of Indian aesthetics as *rasa* and *dhvani*.

Later aestheticians like Mahima Bhaṭṭa agreed with Kuntaka but said that the difference between *Vakrokti anḍ Dhvani* is only superficial. Kuntaka classifies *vakrokti* into the following six types :

(1) *Varṇa Vinyāsa Vakratā* (deviation in the arrangement of letters).

(2) *Pada Pūrārdha Vakratā* (deviation in the substantive parts of words).

(3) *Pada Parārdha Vakratā* (deviation in the terminal parts of words).

(4) *Vākya Vakratā* (Syntactic deviation).

(5) *Prakaraṇa Vakratā* (deviation from tradition in conceiving an incident or a chapter of a work of literature).

(6) *Prabandha Vakratā* (deviation in the construction of the whole plot).

In the following section of this paper the various types of linguistic deviation, as classified by Dr Geoffrey Leech, wlll be discussed. An attempt will be made to compare them with the different kinds of *Vakrokti* mentioned above.

1. *Lexical Deviation* : Any deviation in the form and function of vocabulary in poetry is called lexical deviation. It is further sub-divided into *(a)* Neologism, *(b)* Affixation and Compounding, and *(c)* Functional Conversion.

Neologism is the coining of new lexical items. Though all great poets coin new words and phrases, this is not restricted to poets alone. All other linguistic practitioners contribute to the development of lexis and some of their creations become part of the vocabulary of the language.

Affixation is applying an existing rule of language with greater generality and freedom to coin new expressions. The rule which gives acceptability to negativizations like 'unmoving' and 'unpacking' is applied with greater freedom to coin expressions like 'unfathering' as Hopkins does in his poem 'The Wreck of the Deutschland.'

'...the widow making *unchilding unfathering* deeps'.

Neologism and affixation resemble *pada pūrvārdha vakratā* which allows the coining of new expressions, by taking the help of *dhātus* and *upasargas*. Hopkins' method of compounding is close to the Indian tradition of *samāsa-kalpanā*.

Adapting an item of vocabulary to a new grammatical function, without its form being changed, is functional conversion, as in the example below :

'Storms *bugle* his fame' (Hopkins).

'Bugle' traditionally used as a noun has been used as a verb by Hopkins in the same form.

Almost all Sanskrit and Indian language poets experimented with lexical deviation to enrich their languages. But neologism does not appear to have been so popular as it is in English. The reason might be that Sanskrit, the oldest language in India, could not borrow lexis from other languages as a modern language like English can. The Indian languages, till very recently, were too hide-bound to accept new coinages as they did not have the sanction of *pūrva-kavi prayoga*,

2. *Grammatical Deviation* : Any deviation from the morphology or syntax of the language is called grammatical deviation in stylistics. Leech feels that morphological deviations are very

rare in English poetry. Misclassification is also a kind of syntactic deviation. The syntactic position grammatically reserved for a certain class of word is filled by a word belonging to a different class in misclassification. When Dylan Thomas says 'a grief ago', 'grief' has taken the place of a time adverbial.

Among modern English poets Hopkins, Eliot and Auden very successfully experimented with syntax. Auden in some of his poems wrote in 'a subjectless and articleless style.'

Sanskrit aestheticians do not view this deviation with sympathy. Hence they classified it under the 'flaws of poetry' rather than under acceptable deviations. *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* calls them *akramatā* and *prasiddha viruddhatā*.

3. *Phonological Deviation* : Any deviation from the established stress pattern of individual words, which is fixed in English, is called phonological deviation. This is generally done by poets to suit the words into metrical scales. For example, Rossetti, deviating from the tradition, stresses the first syllable of 'July' instead of the second. But deviations of this kind are very infrequent in English.

As Sanskrit and the other Indian languages are not stress-timed, the question of phonological deviation does not arise. Most of the Indian metres are based either on *gaṇa* (syllable clusters of different types) or *mātrā* (the number of syllables in each foot).

4. *Graphological Deviation* : Metrical verse follows rules of line length and feet whereas in *verse libre* the length of the line, though it is said to be based on the 'rhythm of sense', is arbitrary to a large extent. Poets such as E. E. Cummings and W. C. Williams violently revolted against this tradition and tried to give visual patterns to the themes of their poems, which are called by Leech 'coded messages and crossword puzzles.' Most of the contemporary poetry is a revolt against the graphology of the traditional metres.

Bandha Kavitā in Indian Languages, to a large extent, is a graphological deviation. Poems written in *Chakra bandha*, *Nāga bandha* and others, in spite of the fact that they follow metrical patterns, can be graphologically presented. Thus a poem in

Nāga bandha, when represented graphologically, looks like a snake. But *bandha kavitā* is a part of the Indian poetic tradition and hence not a deviation according to Kuntaka.

5. *Semantic Deviation :* The apparent irrationality which is present in all great poetry is the basis for semantic deviation as in the following examples :

'The child is the father of man'—Wordsworth

'Beauty is truth and truth beauty'—Keats

Kuntaka includes all deviations in respect of *alaṁkāra* (embellishments to poetry) under *Vākya Vakratā* and *alaṁkāras* like *Virodhābhāsa* are very close to semantic deviation.

According to Leech, dialectal, registral and historical deviations are ancillary. Borrowing from a dialect, which is a deviation from the Standard Language, is dialectal deviation. It can be found in the poetry of Burns, Kipling and the Black poets.

M. A. K. Halliday feels that 'language according to use' is a 'register.' Register mainly depends upon the topic of discourse and the people who participate in it. Some poets mix up more than one register in the same situation as does Eliot in his *The Waste Land*.

A poet of a particular age writing the language of the past is called historical deviation. Milton's Latinisms and Anglo-Saxon connotations are some of the best examples for historical deviation in English literature.

The European concept of deviation in poetry takes into account only its linguistic aspects. But Kuntaka's theory of *Vakrokti* considers the formal and structural aspects of poetry as well. Hence concepts corresponding to *prakaraṇa vakratā* and *prabandha vakratā* cannot be found in the West.

When an incident which does not go well with the development of the plot is twisted to suit its needs, it is called *prakaraṇa vakratā*. The example cited by Kuntaka in his *Vakrokti Jīvitam* is the curse of Durvāsā that Kālidāsa introduced in his *Śākuntalam* to enhance the enjoyment of *Sṛṅgāra* and to justify the character of Duśyanta. When the *rasa* is changed altogether, it is termed *prabandha vakratā*. Bhaṭṭanarayaṇa borrowed the

plot of *Véṇīsaṁhīra* from the *Mahābhārata* whose dominant *rasa* is *sāntā*, and changed it to *vīra*.

In conclusion, it can be said that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the Indian and the Western concepts of poetic deviation. When contrasted with thc Western concept, *Vakrokti* of Indian aesthetics is not only older but also wider in its usefulness and applicability.

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Kapil Kapoor

THE CONCEPT OF *ALAṀKĀRA* AND THE THEORY OF METAPHOR

Under the impulse of Saussurean linguistics, the problem of literary discourse, its nature and its difference, if any, from other forms of discourse, specially discourses that are directly referential, has received close investigation in several recent western literary theories.

Being a problem of defining and identifying 'literariness', in terms of literary meaning, i.e. what constitutes literary meaning or to put it in other words how literary meaning is constituted, this inquiry is now a part of the larger investigation into how humans use forms of lanuage to communicate something and for communication among themselves. The investigation, therefore, has understandably focussed on the organisation and more specifically on the possibilities of manipulating the elements and structures of language to create a possible world and has reached a point where the boundary between ordinary language and literary language has grown fuzzy and dissolved and a new relationship between language and reality, particularly transcendental reality, has come to be perceived.[1] In this dissolution, as also of the other long-maintained western dichotomies such as language and thought, factual and imaginary, literal and figurative, analyses of the metaphoric principle and a recognition of (i) the essentially metaphoric nature of all language, and of (ii) the doubly 'deviant' literary language have been chiefly instrumental.

To the student of Sanskrit and Sanskrit poetics, this modern intellectual formulation, articulated in an alien elaborateness in contemporary western writings, is not unfamiliar. Language, at the heart of linguistic and philosophic meditations in the Indian tradition, has never been construed as an absolute object, its denotation has never been mistaken for reality, albeit its great

power and its paramount role as an instrument in all human affairs, including knowledge of all kinds has been explicitly recognised.2 It is on account of this awareness of the centrality of language that a rigorous scientific linguistic tradition built up which provided an elaborate, varied and objective apparatus for the analysis of all *vāṅgmaya*, i.e. everything that has being in language. And as the fifth *vidyā*, a discipline to be taught and learnt, Sanskrit poetics, too developed its theory and analytic framework in close interaction with Sanskrit grammar. Such was the close interaction that it has even been suggested that early speculations in grammar might have in fact originated in poetics.3

Kāvya, as opposed to *Śāstra*, is the science of *ukti*, expression, and dealing as it does with expression both in prose and poetry, it is the foundation of all the other fourteen *śāstras*.4 *Ukti* is the product of combination of any or all of the five kinds of *pada*—(i) those that take nominal inflection, (ii) those that take verb-inflection, (iii) primary derived nominals, (iv) secondary derived nominals, and (v) compounds, whose permutations and combinations produce infinite expressions.5 What renders *ukti* into *kāvyokti*, ordinary language into literary language? This is subject-matter of *kāvya-śāstra*, poetics. It is the element of 'literariness', *alaṁkāra* that qualifies *kāvyokti*, literary language, and in its larger sense the term *alaṁkāra* stands for literariness and this explains the use of the term *alaṁkāra-śāstra* for the discipline of poetics. Distinguishing consistently between the materiality of poetry *(kāvya-śarīra)* and its spirit or essence, its determinant as poetry *(kāvyātmā)*, different schools of poetics highlight, in fact differ, in positing a particular quality as the essence or determinant of 'literariness.' It is *rasa*, potential for creating a state of mind in the reader, for the *Rasa*-school; for *Rīti* poeticians, it is the type or mode of language, specifically lexis, chosen and employed, that constitutes this 'literariness'; for *Dhvani*-followers, it is the *suggestiveness* of the expression, the vibrations of meaning; for *Vakrokti*-school, *kāvyokti* is always *vakra*, arched, 'defamiliarizsd' or 'deviant' and for the Alaṁkārists, it is the *alaṁkāra*, in its narrow sense, the figures of speech, that consti-

tute the essence of literature. The important points is that all these separate qualities are produced by language, by the innovative employment of different linguistic categories and devices, and that all the schools of poetics, including *Rasa*-theory, which is actually a theory of aesthetics, are founded in *Vyākaraṇaśāstra*, the discipline of grammar, whose principle exponents are Pāṇini; Kātyāyana, Patañjali, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and Bhartṛhari.

While *Vakrokti*-theory is most directly grammatical, the *Alaṁkāra*-theory is essentially rhetorical and, claiming that rhetorical language is essentially figurative, it is concerned chiefly with explicating how literary expression is interpreted. *Alaṁkāra*-theory assumes that literary meaning is always implicit, indirectly expressed, and as such it assimilates the categories of the other theories—*rīti* (mode), *vakratā* (deviation), *alaṁkāras* (tropes) and *dhvani* (suggestiveness)—which become then exegetical principles for explicating meaning which does not lie on the surface and has to be reconstructed with the help of several factors—peculiarities of (a) the speaker, (b) the person spoken to, (c) intonation, (d) the sentence, (e) the expressed meaning, (f) the presence of another, (g) context, (h) place, (i) time, and so forth.[6]

It is this conception of literary language as referentially figurative, that makes *Alaṁkāra*-theory so interesting for the contemporary western theory of metaphor. In the West too, the word 'metaphor' in its restricted sense refers to a figure of speech (*rūpaka*) but in its wider sense it stands for the principle of figurativeness in language with its problematic of interpretation. One can talk properly of the metaphoric mode of which the metaphor is a typical realization. Metaphor is the primary figure of speech in the West, for it is an instance of general cognitive processes at their most *creative* or speculative.[7] The Western mind nourished by Aristotelean syllogistic reasoning distinctly prefers the inferential epistemology—hence, the preoccupation with metaphor and the prestige of the metaphoric processes of not only cognition but also expression. We have elsewhere shown how to the Indian mind perceptible similarity has greater epistemological value and how the grammar of language is bound

to constrain the creativity of the metaphor.[8] In the history of one civilization itself, phases of the metaphoric and the visible mode seem to alternate. In England, for instance, the Elizabethan age—in fact, the entire Renaissance period—was more given to metaphoric thinking and expression. So was the Romantic Age. But the late 17th and the 18th centuries distrusted the metaphor.[9] Even within the Western world, the British, being empiricist and pragmatic, tend to be less speculative than the continental thinkers and in the early 19th century, the Romantic poets were obviously inspired by German Idealism in their fervour for the symbolic and the metaphoric mode when they began to talk of 'the still, sad music of humanity/whose dwelling is the light of setting suns.'[10] But the Romantic phase in the history of English literature must be seen only as an episode in the advancement of 'reason' and the latter half of the 19th century and the modern age are extremely suspicious of the metaphoric mode. However, the 19th century Europe which spawned so many new ideologies and new systems, owed its creative impulse to its dissatisfaction with the concrete, with what was visible, to its urge to see resemblances where none was visible, and to invest the visible and the concrete with a quality of unknowability and nebulosity. Nietzsche (.844-1900) was the high-priest of this creed of cosmic flux and chaos, a man nevertheless with great faith in man's ability to *create* both meaning and order; he argued that metaphor was 'a proof of the strength of spirit, to be able to leap over what lies before our feet and grasp after what lies far away'.[11] Nietszche was responsible for questioning the distinction between literal and figurative meaning thereby arguing that all language is rhetorical.

The modern theory of metaphor, at least in the English speaking world, owes much to the pioneering work of I. A. Richards in the 1930s.[12] He obviously built, like his predecessor Coleridge, on the European thought and his work does recall Nietzsche's thinking. But Richards 'sensed the central importance of metaphor and was able to develop a theory of what metaphor is and how it functions'.[13] His work, and of those who followed him, called into question the traditional assumption

of (i) the distinction between literal and figurative usage of language, (ii) similarity as an explanatory basis, and (iii) adequacy of word meanings to interpret a metaphoric expression. It is now a credo that (i) there is no literal usage which consists of fixed meaning, that (ii) metaphors are 'tensive' in which the difference is as important as similarity. Finally, and most importantly, it has been argued that words have meanings only in contexts and that a metaphor is interactive and achieves meaning through an interaction of a series of contexts—of the words, of the sentence, of the writer and of the whole composition and of the reader. In this way a metaphor creates meaning, or, from the other point of view, the reader creates a meaning. The poet creates room or space, a favourite metaphor of deconstructivists, in which the reader maneouvres to construct a meaning. Coleridge, the source of much of this tradition within English criticism, speculated on a 'figurative space' which would have 'real Being and energy and the active power of figure', and spoke in his analyses of Shakespeare of the poet's creation of 'a space which invites the reader to enter and co-create...'[13]

As a theory of figurative speech, then, the contemporary theories of metaphor have liberated the metaphoric mode from the constraints of the constituting lexis and shown a distinct preference for the cognitive over the semantic view, i.e., are more concerned with the processes of interpretation than with the semantic content of the constituting words. Three distinct interpretive theories can be isolated—(i) the immanent theories, which include the substitution theory identified with Roman Jakobson's celeberated selection and combination analysis [14] and the interactive theory associated with I. A. Richards;[15] (ii) the conventionalist theories which concern themselves with the role of contexts and the speaker's intention and (iii) the constructivist theory, which is exegetical and involves a reader-writer-text interaction and invites the reader to construct a meaning on the basis of culture, history and the total discourse of the text.[16] All the theories have enlarged the resources of language by extending meaning beyond the boundaries of the word and by releasing meaning from the bondage of time, place and the user.

Those who are familiar with English literary criticism, and particularly the contemporary criticism, would agree that the western code of interpreting literary texts is very different from ours—the way the critic reasons, the way he takes the text *apart*, the way he seeks to discover the *hidden*, and often not so honourable, intentions, the vocabulary of the western man, the free-wheeling, speculative approach that eschews consistent system-building and the absence of a cumulative tradition in which every successive text builds on the preceding one—in all these the Indian literary mind and the western literary mind differ deeply from each other. But the *issues* are, as they are bound to be, the same, and it is no surprise therefore that the Indian poeticians raised practically the same questions, or that several of their proposals have an affinity with western ideas. What marks off the Indian tradition is its cumulativeness and its effort to build an *integrated* system. The Indian mind is essentially a synthesizing mind and seeks to *reconcile* theories rather than oppose them. This is true in poetics, too.

In their exposition of how the implied meaning *(pratīyamāna)* of language is grasped or interpreted, the *alaṁkārikas* have based themselves on the Indian theories of meaning, particularly those propounded by the *Vaiyākaraṇās,* grammarians, and the *Mīmāṁsakas,* the exegetists.[17] Prof. K. Kunjunni Raja has brilliantly expounded these Indian theories of meaning and the relationship between the general theories and the interpretation of metaphoric language.[18] Essential to the Indian theories of meaning are the following basic postulations ;

(1) The nature of the linguistic sign, *śabda,* which is a relation between the *signifiant* and *signifie,* which are both mental constructs;[19]

(2) the relationship between *śabda* and *artha,* word and meaning, which emanates from the above definition—a conventional, non-invariant relationship,[20] one in which no fixed, or stable meaning, in the sense of denoting *an object*, is posited. The *śabda* or word constituted by letters simply has as its function the power to indicate meaning(s). Reality is not represented directly by the *śabda.*

(3) the concept of significative powers of words *(śabda-śakti)* which are three-fold—*abhidā* (which is the cause of *vācyārtha*, overtly or directly expressed meaning), *lakṣaṇā* (which is the cause of *pratīyamāna* or implied meaning), *vyañjana* (which is the cause of indirectly suggested meaning or echoes). The Alaṁkārika-s, viz. Abhinavagupta, also mention the fourth power of *tātparya*, which is the cause of making known the speaker's intention;[21] and, finally.

(4) the indivisibility of meaning, of the indicator of meaning, and of the elements of meaning—this is the substance of Bhartṛhari's *sphoṭa*-doctrine. This precludes separation of meanings into literal-figurative. primary-secondary, etc. All meaning resides in the indicator as a totality—what one has to understand is the process of expression and cognition of a particular meaning.

A wide spectrum of thinkers—logicians, and philosophers, besides the Alaṁkārika-s—devoted themselves to the problem of metaphoric language, ostensibly because metaphoric language is an instrument for making statements about a largely inexpressible reality.[22] Of particular importance is the theory of *lakṣaṇā* (including *vyañjanā*),[23] i.e. how is metaphoric language pinned down to its referent. An examination of this theory reveals an integral system of interpretation, several aspects of which relate rather directly to the recent western rethinking about the metaphoric language. Consider, for example, the assumption of *similarity*, as the foundation of metaphoric meaning, an assumption which has been questioned in the contemporary western theory. According to the Nyāya thinker Gautama, 'similarity' is not among the 10 possible relations[24] between the item employed and the expressed. The relations are listed by him with examples (we omit the examples) : (1) association, (2) location, (3) purpose, (4) behaviour, (5) measure, (6) weighing, (7) proximity (8) inherent connection, (9) cause, and (10) prominence. As a logician, Gautama has made a grammar-bound analysis of the relation between the expressed referent and the implied referent, and has characterised metaphoric expressions as sorts of collapsed gram-

matical relations and exhibiting elision of different grammatical categories. Thus the expression—*mañcān krośanti* ('The cots cry') results from a collapsing and reduction of two expressions.

(1) There are children in the cots.

(2) The children are crying.

Through several grammatical operations, which do not concern us here, we arrive at the metaphoric mode in which the relations between the expressed and the implied referents are diverse and complex. The exegetical Jaimini enumerated, on the other hand, six bases of figurative language,[25] and included *similarity* as one of them : (1) accomplishment of purpose, (2) same origin, (3) similarity, (4) praise or modification, (5) preponderance, and (6) presence of indicative sign (as in a synecdoche). In a more generalised typology, Mukulabhaṭṭa quotes another thinker, Bhartṛmitra, as having noted five relations[26] : (1) indirect connection (2) similarity, (3) association (such as proximity), (4) centrality and (5) association of action. These analyses of relations which show increasing refinement and generalisation reflect an acute awareness of the complexities of the internal structure of a metaphoric expression and have considerable explanatory strength.

Next, the concept of *śabda-śakti*, the three significative powers which are latent *simultaneously* in the word, leads rather naturally to the view that a particular meaning becomes manifest in a particular use by virtue of a process of *upacāra* or transfer. In this framework, the dichotomies literal-figurative or primary-secondary are neither motivated nor posited : the nearest dichotomy is 'gauṇi-vyakta', i.e. convert and overt. But at no point does the *lakṣaṇa*-theory talk of substitution of one meaning for another. The clearest statement on this is by the Buddhist thinkers who question the distinction between primary and secondary referents on the ground that all language is essentially figurative because 'the essential nature of an object transcends the pale of all forms of knowledge and expression. Each word is applied to its object only indirectly by a sort of transfer, or *upacāra*. The thing-in-itself *(svālakṣaṇa)* cannot be directly denoted by a word'.[27] Some sort of transfer of meaning is thus postulated even in the

ordinary language. Buddhist theory of meaning and that of some Mīmāṁsakas as well, is of great interest in the context of contemporary discussions about the relation between language and reality. Of particular interest is the Mīmāṁsaka Kumārila-Bhaṭṭa's discusion of *nirūḍhā-lakṣanā-s*28—'faded metaphors' or what the West calls 'dead metaphors'. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa says that old metaphors express the implied sense as if it were the denotation itself, and that ordinary language is full of expressions in which the metaphoric meaning has become the normal meaning.

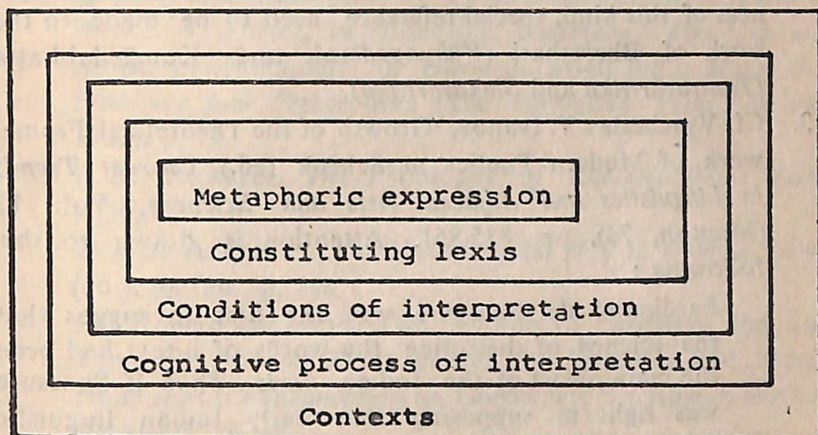
Finally, when we look at the theory of *lakṣaṇā* as a theory of interpretation of figurative language, the parallels with modern western thinking are equally surprising and interesting. First of all, interpretation takes place when certain *conditions* are met. There are three such conditions : (i) inapplicability of *abhidā* i.e. a contradiction between the denotation and the reader/hearer's knowledge of the way things are; (ii) usage, i. e. some meanings, qualities or actions, etc., that are popularly associated with certain words or objects viz. strength with the elephant, triggers the implied meaning; (iii) motive that the speaker/writer has in not expressing the meaning directly. It may also be the case that the meaning is inexpressible denotatively. A celebrated oft-quoted example is that of the sentence 'The sun has set' acquiring different meaning when uttered by a thief or a student. Once the conditions are satisfied, an *interaction* takes place between the expressed and implied referent which can be classified into three kinds according to the *degree* of interaction between the referents : (i) the *vācyārtha*, overt meaning, is completely suppressed as in 'The village on the Ganga', (ii) *vācyārtha* is restricted but included in the implied sense, as in 'The lances enter', and (iii) only a part of the *vācyārtha* is retained, as in 'The village is burnt'. This interaction may generate a new meaning as in the case of *bahuvrihi* compounds. In actual interpretation, four cognitive processes are involved : (i) association and transfer *(upacāra)* and this involves working out of the relations between the expressed and implied referent (see above); (ii) *arthāpatti*, postulation of a

mediating fact to explain what otherwise does not make sense. This is a logical process and amounts to discovering for oneself something like the middle term in a syllogism. Prof. Kunjunni Raja quotes *śābarabhāṣya* on this.[29] In metaphorical language the denotation of the word and the speaker's/writer's intention are the two factors that are apparently irrconcilable are related through this process; (iii) *anumāna,* inference. Mahimbhaṭṭa in his *Vyakti-viveka* powerfully argues that the so-called figurative meanings can be identified on the basis of the denotation itself by inference and that the figurative language is interpreted through the inferential mode of reasoning.[30] Finally, (iv) *tātparyavṛtti*: words are not interpreted separately or in isolation—we establish the mutual relation of the words in a sentence to arrive at the total meaning and the meaning of constituting words. Bhartṛhari's famous example, 'Protect the curd from the crows' uttered to mean 'protect the curd from all birds and animals' exemplifies how the notion of of 'protection of curd' imposes a different meaning on the word 'crow'.

These cognitive processes operate in the frame-work of given contexts. Bhartṛhari states in *vākyapadīya* that the primary meaning is that which is well-known, and the metaphoric meaning is that which is worked out with the help of contexts.[31] Several contextual factors have been explicitly recognised, such as the speaker, the person spoken to, the sentence, the place, the time, the occasion or the subject and gestures, and each has been explicated with examples.[32] Ānandavardhana extends the notion of *context* to include *saṁghaṭanā,* the total structural or the whole composition.[33] Metaphors in literature get their rich connotation from the compositional contexts. It is possible to fix the meaning of metaphoric language only in terms of one or several of these contexts. It is by virtue of the determining contexts that even ordinary statements, the *svabhāvokti* of the *alaṁkārika-s,* has only *pratīyamāna* or indirectly expressed meaning. This is how the famous Wordsworthian line that Matthew Arnold cites from *Michael*—'And never lifted up a single stone' means much more than what it says, or how the first two lines of Shelley's *Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples* :

'The sun is warm, the sky is clear
The waves are dancing fast and bright,...'

inculcate a mood of contemplative sorrowfulness regardless of their cheerful lexis. The process of interpretation is visualised thus as one integrated operation as follows :



'Literariness' of the the literary discourse then consists in the suggestiveness of its meaning which is a matter not just of words but of the complex interaction of different factors in the communication situation. This meaning has to be constructed through a proper exegesis. The Indian poeticians have formulated just such a mode of exegesis.

Even this rather summary review of this theory of interpretation of figurative language shows its value in terms of its exhaustiveness and its powerful insights into the nature of the metaphoric mode. It can be profitably analysed in conjunction with the contemporary western theories, an exercise that would undoubtedly enrich our understanding. More importantly, it offers a promising desideratum for Indian scholars, who while too willing to adopt alien theories, hesitate to investigate or extend the rich native tradition.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cf. Jacques Derrida, 'The Supplement of Copula : Philosophy *before* Linguistics; and Louis Marin, 'On the Interp-

retation of Ordinary Language : A Parable of Pascal' in Josue V. Harrari (ed.), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1980), pp. 107 et. seq. and p. 239.

2. Though the earliest available texts show an awareness of this kind, special reference need to be made to the work of Bhartṛhari *(Vākyapadīya)* and Kumārilabhaṭṭa *(Tantravārttika* and *Ślokavārttika)*.
3. Cf. Vyacheslav V. Ivanov, 'Growth of the Theoretical Framework of Modern Poetics' in Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics and Adjacent Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 12 (Mouton, 74), pp. 835-861. Attention is drawn to the following :

   Ferdinand de Saussure was the first to sugges that the science of dissecting the words of a text had been the main object of the Indian *kavis*...Thus if Saussure was right in supposing that early Indian linguistic thought originated in poetic devices, then in modern linguistics his own studies helped to revive this ancient link between poetry and grammar. It is by no means accident that Indian *Kāvyalakshanam* (from the abovementioned *Kavi)* is rendered by a modern translator as 'grammar of poesy'...that reminds one immediately of Roman Jakobson's 'conception of the grammar of poetry', p. 836.
4. Cf. Rājaśekhara, *Kāvya-Mīmāṁsā* (Bihar Rashtrabhasa Parishad, Patna, 1954), ch. 2, p. 9 [Sk. text with Hindi translation].
5. *Ibid.*, chapter VI, p. 54-55.
6. *Kāvya-Prakāsha of Mammaṭa*, tr. by Ganganatha Jha (The Indian Press, Allahabad, 1925), III. 21-22, page 37.
7. Cf. Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs : Semiotics, Literature and Deconstruction* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981), pp. 190-203.
8. Cf. Kapil Kapoor, 'Metaphor in Sanskrit and English Criticism' in *Journal of Literary Criticism* (Doaba House, Delhi, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 29-45.

9. see Addison, *Spectator*, no. *62*, May 11, 1711. He talks of the need to avoid being misled '...by affinity to take one thing for another'.
10. See S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. De Selincourt, I, p. 15.
11. Quoted and translated by Paul Cantor from *Gessamelte Werke*, V, 316-17, in 'Friedrich Nietzsche : The Use and Abuse of Metaphor' in David S. Miall (ed.), *Metaphor : Problems and Perspectives* (The Harvester Press, Sussex, 1982), p. 75.
12. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, 1936).
13. Patricia A. Parker, 'The Metaphorical Plot' in David S. Miall (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 148.
14. Cf. Roman Jakobson 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances' in Jacobson and Morris Halle (eds.), *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague, 1956).
15. Richards, *op. cit.*
16. It has been argued that the literary text lends itself more appropriately to this interpretative theory. See Stein Hangom Olsen, 'Understanding Literary Metaphors' in David S. Miall, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-55. The contemporary deconstructive readings employ all the strategies. Cf. Patricia Parker, *op, cit.*
17. Ānandavardhana, the Dhvani-theorist, expressly acknowledges his debt to the grammarians (see, *vṛtti* on kārikā 16, *Dhvanyāloka*, Haridas Sanskrit Series, Chaukhamba, Varanasi, 1979, p. 65) and particularly to the *sphoṭa* doctrine of Bhartṛhari. For an understanding of the *alaṁkārika* conception, the work of Kumārila-Bhaṭṭa is equally important; see *Tantravārttika*, tr. by Ganganatha Jha (Calcutta 1903-1924; Second Edition, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1983), particularly I, III, 6, 9, 10; III, III, 7; III, IV, 4, and *Ślokavārttika*, tr. by Ganganatha Jha (Sri Garib Das Orintal Series, No. 8, Calcutta, 1900-1908; Second Edition, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1983), particularly *Sūtras* VI-XXVI.

18. Cf. *Indian Theories of Meaning* (The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Madras, 1963).
19. See Patañjali's definition of *Śabda* in *Mahābhāśya*, commentator Yudhishṭher Mīmāṁsaka (Ramlal Kapur Trust Press, Bahalgarh, Sonepat, Haryana, 1979) [Sk. text with Hindi Commentary], I, 1, p. 5. This well-established concept of linguistic sign, one may surmise, must have helped or inspired Saussure, a Professor of Sanskrit, to formulate his analogous doctrine which has had such a revolutionary impact on western linguistics and poetics.
20. See for alternative views, *Mīmāṁsā sūtra*, I. 1.5; *Nyāyasūtra*, II. 1.55,56; *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, VII. 2.20—in *Ṣaḍdarśanasūtra saṁgraha*, ed. by Sw. Dwarikadas Sastri (Sudhi Prakashan, Varanasi, 1984) [in Sanskrit], p. 1., p. 160, 192, respectively. See also *Vākyapadīya*, tr. by K. A. Sudramania Iyer (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1974), III.3.29 in Ch. III, pt. i. See also *Ślokavārttika, Pratyakṣa* Section, verse 228, p. 109.
21. Kunjunni Raja, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
22. Witness, for example, the metaphoric *mahāvākyas* of the Upanishads–*tat tvam asi, Aham Brahmasmi*, etc.
23. As Kunjunni Raja has pointed out (*op. cit.* p. 295) 'Some of the Alaṁkarikas like Mukulabhaṭṭa...include *vyañjanā*... under *lakṣaṇā*...Mukulabhaṭṭa defines *lakṣaṇā* in such a way that all instances where the expressed sense indicates other ideas are included in it, and he says that *dhvani*, propounded as a new doctrine by some literary critics, actually falls within the sphere of *lakṣaṇā* itself'.
24. *Ṣaḍdarśanasaṁgraha, sūtra* 11.2.64, p. 163.
25. *Ibid.*, I.3. 23-28, p. 6.
26. Kunjunni Raja, *op.* cit., p. 238-9.
27. Prof. Kunjunni Raja cites in support (*op. cit.*, p. 247) the Buddhist text *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, ed. by Sylvan Levi (Paris, 1925), pt. 1, p. 17.
28. *Tantravārttika*.
29. *op. cit.*, p. 172.
30. *Vyakti-viveka*.
31. *Vākyapadiya*, II, 266-7, 280.
32. See Mammaṭa, *Kāvyaprākaśa*, III. 21-22, pp. 38 et. seq.
33. Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*.

G. B. Mohan Thampi

THE DOCTRINE OF *SĀDHĀRṆĪKARAṆA* AND SOME WESTERN AESTHETIC THEORIES

The concept of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* evolved as a by-product of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's discussion of the differentia of the poetic use of language. Poetry and philosophical treatises are structures made of words; but the effects on the listeners are different. To account for the difference Bhaṭṭanāyaka attributed two additional special functions to language of poetry.[6] *Abhidhā*, denotation, is the power which all words have in all contexts. But in poetic language *abhidhā* functions conjointly with the additional special functions which he calls *bhāvakatva* and *bhojakatva*. The power of *bhāvakatva* achieves the *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* of the *vibhāvas;* that is, it removes all personal relations and associations from the characters and their emotions and gives them a special ontological status. This power of *bhāvakatva* operates through the *guṇas* (the poetic excellences), figures of speech and other rhetorical devices, indirect evocative technique, etc.; when a play is staged, acting contributes to this power of *bhāvakatva*. It is the power of 'framing' or 'distancing' the poem or drama which lifts it above the plane of ordinary reality and persuades the reader to apprehend the characters and situations and images in the non-ordinary way. This is not different from the idea of Wellek and Warren when they say: 'Art imposes some kind of framework which takes the statement of the work out of the world of reality.'[1] The process of *bhoga* is the enjoyment of emotions which appear in transpersonalised mode.

Though Bhaṭṭanāyaka's special terminology was repudiated by later aestheticians, yet most of them, including Abhinavagupta accepted, refined, and elaborated upon the concept of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*. It became a pivotal doctrine in the theory of *rasa*. This concept embraces, just as *rasa*, all the three factors in aesthetics:

the poet's creative experience, the poem, and the reader's response. The starting point of the poet's creation may be a personal experience or a personal vision, or an experience which happened to other people. But the process of creation involves a snapping of the relation between his ego and the emotions. Once the interests of the ego are kept in the background and prevented from intruding in the process of artistic creation the emotions can be objectified in terms of the universally accessible patterns of images and symbols. Whatever may be the origin of the experience giving birth to a poem, once a poem is created in a finished from, it becomes transpersonal, it breaks its ties with the poet. It is potentially everybody's experience. In our response to the poem we are able to transcend our ego precisely because the poem exists as an entity independent of the egoistic interests of the poet or anybody else.

Indian aestheticians, generally, are of the opinion that poets should not handle contemporary themes. Because, it is very difficult for the poet to distance his theme from his immediate personal interests. The subject-matter of most of the ancient Indian works of literature is taken from the epics written in the remote past. The events and attitudes of a particular period take some time to settle down in a pattern to be placed in a meaningful perspective. The pattern which emerges out of the present cannot be adequately clear for a truthful portrayal. The ancients put it in their own way : contemporary subject-matter is not permissible because *karma*, actions, and their *phala*, results, cannot be shown in their causal chain.2 We know that a writer violates the internal necessity of the sequence of events in a work of literature only at his peril. We are reminded of Coleridge's criterion of great poetry, namely, its objectivity :

> A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself. At least I have found, that where the subject is taken immediately from the author's personal sensations and experiences, the excellence of a particular poem is but an

equivocal mark and often fallacious pledge, of genuine poetic power.[3]

It must be made clear that the theory of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* does not necessarily compel the poet to abandon personal and contemporary subject-matters. It only insists on the necessity to detach his ego from the experience so that he can objectively embody it in the poem, or, in other words, make the poem 'inhere' it.

In what sense do we say that a character and his emotions in a poem are transpersonal? A person is said to possess real individuality only when he is *vartamāna*, contemporaneous. Real individuality *(svalakṣaṇya)* is possessed only by those who are animated by *arthakriyā*, causal efficiency, the power to produce effects in our practical life.[4] A character has no such real individuality; it has a special *alaukika* status as configuration of meanings. It does not raise the question of reality or unreality. It transcends the specifications of space and time. Commenting on the response evoked by Duṣyanta's description of the flight of the frightened antelope *(Śākuntalam,* I. ii) Abhinavagupta says that what appears there is fear uncircumscribed by time and space. This perception is different from the ordinary perceptions of fear ('I am afraid, he—my enemy, my friend, anybody—is afraid') because the latter are affected by pain, pleasure, etc. Aesthetic experience consists of direct perception *(sākṣātkāra)*, which requires that the mind must be concentrated *(ekāgra)* and free from all obstacles *(vighna)*. The intrusion of egoistic interests and feelings is one of the obstacles. The emotion of fear mentioned above may be said to enter directly into our hearts to vibrate and dance before our eyes.[5] Thus the emotions embodided in poetry do not have spatial and temporal determinations; they are perceived not as part of the practical life of actual persons; they are perceived in the transpersonalised form.

In ordinary life we cannot react to the emotions of other men except and with reference to our personal interests. Such reactions are absent from aesthetic experience. It has been widely observed that a character like Hamlet is more 'real' to us than our most intimate friend. This apparent paradox

is true because Hamlet as created by Shakespeare is a complete being whose essential inner life is revealed to us concretely. We can have a full and round view of Hamlet because, in the perception of such a character, our view is not clouded by our egoistic interests. In all our dealings with the objects and people in the world the centre of our interest is our ego with its desires and aversions. This fact prevents us from completely understanding another person's inner life. The fragmentary nature of our knowledge about real persons is the result of our inability to transcend our ego in the transactions of everyday life. In aesthetic experience the centre shifts from the ego to the poetic focus and thus our response becomes transpersonal. Aesthetic experience is directly correlated neither with the past nor with the future.[6] A poem is not a leaf from the autobiography of the poet; it is an objectification of collectively sharable human experience. In this way, the doctrine of *sādhāraṇikaraṇa* raises the entire aesthetic process from the creation of a poem to the reader's response to the transpersonal level.

The concept of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* does not imply that we de-individualise and departicularise the characters and their emotions. We do not apprehend the poetic emotions in the form of some vague, abstract, and generalised 'universal essences'. The idea that we apprehend Sītā not as a highly individualised woman but simply as the generic essence of being a wife is an absurd one.[7] *Rasa* is 'manifested' by poetic language. The Sanskrit word used is *abhivyakti*; the word itself implies the connotation of individual *(vyakti)*. The perception of *rasa* is always an individualised perception. The confusion has resulted partly from translating *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* as 'generalisation'. The antithetical concepts involved in the doctrine are not 'general' and 'particular', but 'personal' and 'transpersonal'. Without individualisation and concreteness an image or a character cannot have vividness and vitality, it cannot 'vibrate and dance before our eyes' and will leave no clear impression on the mind of the reader.[8]

Kant : 'Disinterested Satisfaction'

The removal of the aesthetic object from the practical causal

chain of events of ordinary life was vaguely felt by St. Thomas Aquinas who said that beauty gave rise to an experience of 'reposeful contemplation'.[9] It was also noticed by the 18th century British aestheticians like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson from whom Kant derived so much of his system.[10] It was Kant, however, who gave it a firm philosophical foundation.

According to Kant, the beautiful is the object of dis-interested satisfaction. He uses the phrase 'disinterested satisfaction' not because he was impervious to the moral implication of aesthetic experience, but because he wanted to demarcate the realm of taste from extra-aesthetic considerations. He abstracts aesthetic experience from individual eccentric sensuous preferences, utilitarian ends, and egoistic prejudices and desires. 'Every interest vitiates the judgment of taste and robs of its impartiality.'[11] By 'interest' he means the pleasure in the 'existence' of the object. In aesthetic response we are concerned only with the 'representation' of the object. As long as our private interests agitate our mind there will be craving for possession which is inimical to the contemplative mood.

This recognition of the disinterestedness of aesthetic experience led Kant to formulate his doctrine of the 'subjective universality of taste'. Once the experience has been abstracted from all that is private and personal and declared disinterested it becomes a theoretical necessity to uphold its universal validity. Gilbert and Kuhn say : 'An object that pleases me impersonally, pleases me as a member of humanity and not as a unique individual.'[12] The English empircist-sensationist school tended to identify beauty with what is agreeable to the sense thereby reducing aesthetics to the study of mere eccentric preferences. Kant repudiated this notion arguing that, in that case, taste cannot be a universal principle because 'pleasantness' is wholly a subjective feeling. Kant established his doctrine of the universality of taste by postulating an aesthetic commonsense in all men. The aesthetic state consists, in Kantian terminology, in a harmonious interplay of the faculties of imagination and understanding and as these two faculties are there in every human being (without which perception and knowledge are

impossible) we have to suppose the possibility of a common ideal norm, and thus taste can claim universal validity. Kant's own words are given below :

> Since the delight is not based on any inclination of the Subject (or on any other deliberate interest) but the Subject feels himself completely *free* in respect of the liking which he accords to the object, he can find as reason for his delight no personal conditions to which his own subjective self might alone be a party. Hence he must regard it as resting on what he may also presuppose in every other person; and therefore he must believe that he has reason for demanding a similar delight from every one.13

We know that in practice we do not always find such universal agreement in the judgement of specific words of art. But, as aesthetic experience is disinterested, and as the peculiar emotional eccentricities of the subject are irrelevant to the experience, we can, along with Kant, legitimately claim that beauty operates in the common ground between the individual and humanity and hence its universal appeal.

Bullough : *'Psychical Distance'*

Edward Bullough felt that terms like 'detachment' and 'disinterestedness' are closed static concepts which do not take into account the plasticity and variability of aesthetic experience. He used the term 'psychical distance' to denote what we call the transpersonal state of consciousness. Psychical distance is a unique kind of mental process which is sustained in order to contemplate and relish the art object. Distance is produced in the first intance by putting the work of art 'out of gear with our practical actual self; by allowing it stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends.'14 This is the negative side. The positive side is the elaboration of this experience on the new basis created by the inhibitory action of distance; it consists in looking at the art work 'objectively', 'by permitting only such reactions on our part as emphasize the "objective" features of

the experience, and by interpreting even our "subjective" affections not as modes of our being but rather as characteristics of the phenomenon.'15 We are reminded of Kant who observed that 'He [the connoisseur] judges not merely for himself but for all men, and then speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things.'16

Bullough does not want to use the term 'impersonality' because, to him, it connotes coldness, absence of emotions and merely intellectual attention. Distance admits of degree and varies according to the nature of the object and according to the individual's capacity for maintaining a greater or lesser degree of it in the face of different objects and of different arts. If the artist crosses certain limits of propriety the spectator or reader cannot sustain proper distance. Bullough wants 'utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance'.17 Extreme naturalism often threatens the maintenance of proper distance. Explicit references to sexual matters, organic affections, highly controversial and hotly debated public issues tend to provoke only amusement or hostility.18 The Indian traditional theatre does not allow the representation of killing, kissing, embrace, etc., precisely for this reason.

T. S. Eliot : 'Impersonality'

T. S. Eliot is a prominent modern critic who has unreservedly subscribed to the doctrine of impersonality. It is evident that it is his classical predilections and traditionalist attitudes which led him to this doctrine. He mistrusted the romantic theory that poetry is an effusion of the eccentric poet's personal feelings. The essence of the classicism is the acceptance of a body of ideas and a system of values which lie outside of one's individual self. It is true that the tradition which he chose, or, rather, he fashioned for himself is a reactionary scheme of values with religious and fascist overtones. It is also true that he employed this tradition to stem the tide of intellectual and social progress. But his doctrine of impersonality reveals an aspect of the truth about the aesthetic process particularly when we discuss it in the light of the affinity which it bears to the concepts of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, 'distinterestedness' and 'universality'.

Eliot derived his ideas mostly from T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, and Remy de Gourmont—all of whom insist on the impersonality of art. Eliot's frequent shifting of ground, his hesitancy and reservations, and the arguments which advance 'crabwise'[19] make it impossible to formulate his theory with a desirable degree of precision. Nevertheless there are certain statements in his writings which are sufficiently categorical for our purpose.

Eliot starts from the position that aesthetic experience is qualitatatively different from ordinary experience. 'The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art'[20] Some of his explicit statements on impersonality are given below :

> The end of enjoyment of poetry is a pure contemplation from which all the accidents of personal emotion are removed; thus we aim to see the object as really is...[21] Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality.[22]
>
> The emotion of art is impersonal.[23]

In his influential essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' Eliot declares that the suffering man must be separated from the creating poet. It must be made clear that Eliot is not proposing some kind of 'ivory tower' aesthetics. He does not mean that the sufferings of the poet as a man are totally irrelevant to him as a poet; he only maintains that in the act of creation the personal sufferings undergo a transmutation. The separating and distancing of the hazy, incoherent, fleeting experiences from the poet's critical and creative intelligence is necessary to valuate them, to invest them with universal significance and to integrate them into meaningful organic wholes. The poet has to 'fabricate something permanent and holy out of his personal animal feelings.'[24] He has also said: 'Shakespeare, too, was occupied with struggle—which alone constitutes life for a poet—to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal...'[25]

Vincent Buckley, in his *Poetry and Morality* states, unjustifiably I think, that when Eliot talks of impersonality he means poetry to be 'a form through which we can escape the pressure, the actuality, of our emotions.'[26] Donald Davie approves of the criticism levelled against Eliot for advancing the proposition that the quality of a poem has nothing to do with the 'richness or poverty of the artist's emotional life and times when he is not composing.'[27] Eliot does not mean any such thing. Eliot's poet does have a personality and emotions to escape from. He only wants that the poet's particular experience must be united with a general truth.[28] This is not possible without abstracting the experience from the individual consciousness where it occurs and without discovering or inventing suitable correlatives which will make it at at-once impersonal. The fact is that when Eliot was talking about poetry being an escape from emotion and personality he only meant that the poet should subordinate the eccentricities of his personal ideas and emotions to the centrality of European literary and intellectual tradition. 'Escape' is, no doubt, an unhappy word; the poet does not escape into a vacuum or a cloud-cuckoo land; he enters the European mind and enriches it. 'To transcend' is perhaps a better expression. Eliot is clearer in the following passage : '[The greatest art] is impersonal in the sense that personal emotion, personal experience is extended and completed in something impersonal, not in the sense of something divorced from personal experience and passion.'[29]

Some other ideas of Eliot reinforce his doctrine of impersonality. For instance, his ideas of 'objective correlative' and dramatistic form of poetry would oblige the poet to render experiences dramatically by creating characters and situations. His idea of the poet as a medium which amalgamates disparate experiences under the high pressure of creative intensity, though it contains echoes of Platonic inspirational theory of poetic creation, is a complementary doctrine which strengthens his theory of impersonality.

I. A. Richards : 'Synaesthesis'

Though I.A. Richards stresses continuity of poetic experience

with ordinary life experiences of the street or hillside, yet he cannot help making a differentiation between them. While our personal experiences rise and die within our own bosoms, poetic experience is communicable and sharable. 'It may be experienced by many minds only with slight variations.'[30] Once he adopts this position he is compelled to recognise the need to 'frame' the work of literature:

> When we experience it, or attempt to, we must preserve it from contamination, from the iruptions of personal peculiarities. We must keep the poem undisturbed by these or we fail to read it and have some other experience instead. For these reasons we establish a severance, we draw a boundary between the poem and what is not the poem in our experience.[31]

Richards's theory of synaesthesis involves inevitably the corollary of impersonality. The equilibrium and harmony established during poetic experience make us feel impersonal and detached because our 'interests are not canalized in any particular direction'.[32] The systematisation of impulses in poetic experience 'makes the emotion assume a more general character and we find that correspondingly our attitude has become impersonal.'[33] This attitude of detachment and impersonality, however, does not result in any passivity, indifference or spiritual indolence. The tremendous spiritual vitality felt by us in aesthetic experiences should disprove this notion. The process makes us more alive and deepens our awareness. The more the impulses, the greater is the involvement of entire essential being; the higher the organisation, the greater is the value of the experience. In this sense, Richards states, 'to say that we are *impersonal* is merely a curious way of saying that our personality is more *completely* involved'.[34]

Transpersonalisation Is Not Dehumanisation

It is necessary to guard against the danger of making the concepts of detachment, distance, impersonality, etc., rigid and petrified, robbing art of all its human interest. Transpersonal response does not at all mean cold and unemotional response.

Emotions are present in greater or lesser intensity in every genuine aesthetic response. Though the emotions are evoked in the framework of detachment they retain all their human qualities. Misunderstanding of the true import of these concepts and misreading of the actual nature of aesthetic experience have led some critics to question the human basis of art itself. The Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset thinks that the predominantly aesthetic element in a work of art has nothing to do with human attitudes.[35] He condemns all music and literature produced in the nineteenth century for being profoundly and intensely interested in human realities. His theory of pure art, highly stylised art, where the human element will be 'so scanty that it will be hardly visible'[36], leads him to a perverse snob view that in future art will be 'for the artists and not for the masses of the people. It will be an art of caste and not democratic art.'[37] André Malraux says : 'Art must not, if it wants to come to life again, impose any cultural idea upon us, because everything humanistic must be excluded from the start.'[38] Such ideas are a symptom of the artist's alienation from society. Only those artists and theorists who do not receive the vitalising flow of inspiration from the social life as lived by men and women of flesh and blood are capable of negating the human content of art.

Stylisation and dehumanisation are not synonymous. Stylisation is not just the accentuation of the conventional and artificial non-realistic or non-representational aspects of art. The European ballet and the Indian Kathakali are highly stylised art-forms; but they are not, for that reason, dehumanished. The fact is, that stylisation is not merely an element of art, but the very condition of art. All art is stylised. In art, as in life, tendencies can be carried to extreme limits; and when they cross the limits they become their opposites. The naturalist drama has reached a blind alley because it confused art with life and ignored the inevitable requirements of form. The advocates of dehumanisation fail to take into account the undeniable fact that the content of all art—that which is formed—is nothing but human experience in its infinite and inexhaustible variety of

crude and subtle permutations and combinations of emotions. The theories of the 'dehumanists' and the naturalists ignore the dialectical interpenetration of form and content in art and hence their theories cross each other out.

'Empathy' and Participation

The concept of 'empathy' originated in Germany in the writings of Herder and Lotze. 'Empathy' is the English rendering of the German *einfuhlung* which means 'feeling into'. Though the empathy theory is not a comprehensive and self-complete explanation of aesthetic experience, yet it is partially correct in describing an aspect of our emotional response. The theory as formulated by Theodore Lipps and Vernon Lee tries to explain a peculiar fact in the process of perception. What happens when we see a mountain 'rising'? All the rising, past and future, personally experienced or observed or merely imagined are united together in our mind constituting a composite photograph whence all differences are eliminated and wherein all similarities are fused and intensified. This universally applicable general idea of rising gets transferred to the mountain together with the feelings involved in our present acts of raising or rising when looking at the mountain.[39]

We find that this kind of empathy, particularly in its physiological aspects, is involved in the perception of many acts. When we witness an acrobatic feat, even when somebody is lifting a heavy stone, we experience a tautening of our muscles and veins. By itself it cannot be the differentia of aesthetic experience. The crux of the problem is the intriguing paradox that though a work of art is insentient, though it is we who feel the emotions, we conceive the insentient work as having the emotions. There is an objective focus for the experience to be centred on, but what is enjoyed by the reader is the interplay of his own emotions aroused in his heart. Abhinavagupta says : 'What is enjoyed is our own consciousness whose nature is unmixed delight.'[40] Wilhelm Worringer makes a parallel statement : 'We enjoy ourselves in the form of a work of art. Esthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment.'[41] 'Objectified self-enjoyment' cannot be self-indulgence in one's own personal

emotions. Abhinavagupta uses the words *tanmayībhavana*, identification, *nimagnatā*, immersion, to point out the complete fusion between the object and subject in aesthetic experience. Theodore Lipps makes an entirely acceptable observation : 'Empathy is the fact that the antithesis between myself and the object disappears, or rather does not yet exist.'[42] Aesthetic experience is a total response. The Sanskrit word *carvaṇa*, 'chewing', used widely in aesthetic contexts, denotes that aesthetic experience is not passive receptivity, but active conscious participation in the experience realised in the work of art. '*Carvaṇa* is the very life of *rasa*.'[43] The peculiarity of aesthetic experience is that such an intensely active participation and such a total response are not possible without transcending our personality. Evidently, if we refuse to get out of the narrow cage of our ego we shall not able to get into the life of the poem. To the extent that the empathists do not recognise any detachment or impersonality their theory is different from the Indian doctrine of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*; but the Indian doctrine would accommodate empathy within the general context of impersonality.

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M. S. Kushwaha

AUCITYA OR THE CONCEPT OF PROPRIETY

The concept of 'propriety'—termed *aucitya* in Sanskrit, *prepon* in Greek, *decorum* in Latin, and 'decency', 'seemliness' or 'comeliness' in English[1] —is perhaps the only critical concept which is common to both Indian and Western poetics. And in both cases it is one of the earliest critical concepts, dating back to Bharata and Aristotle, respectively.[2] It offers, thus, the literary theoretician a unique opportunity of not only looking into similarities and dissimilarities between Indian and Western approaches but also studying it in a larger prespective in which he can benefit from insights (and errors) of both approaches.

I

The emergence of the concept of propriety in literary criticism may be traced back to two factors which account also for its 'commonness'. One of these is the social practice—common to all societies—of observing certain norms of behaviour and speech, the breach of which is regarded as umbecoming. And the second is the theory of 'imitation' which holds that literature is an imitation *(anukṛti)* of real life.

Obviously thesc two factors are interrelated. One may even contend that the theory of 'imitation' includes also the observance of social customs. They are mentioned here as separate factors simply because both these considerations are discernible in the thinking of the exponents of the concept of propriety and also because they assume divergent and somewhat antithetical positions in Western poetics, where they are referred to as 'convention' (custom) and 'nature', respectively.[3]

The influence of these factors on Indian and Western poetics is equally remarkable. For instance, both Bharata and Aristotle—the founding fathers of this concept in India and in the West—subscribe to the theory of 'imitation'. Aristotle's emphasis on 'imitation' *(mimesis)* in his *Poetics* is well-known, though Bharata

is no less explicit on this point. Speaking of the drama he clearly states :

'The drama as I have devised is an imitation *(anukaraṇam)* of actions and conduct of people, endowed with various emotions and situations. This will relate to actions of men—good, bad and indifferent.'[4] And again :

> 'In it (drama) there is no exclusive representation of you (demons) or of the gods; for the drama is a representation of the state *(bhāvānukīrtana)* of the three worlds.'[5]

A still more positive assertion of this view is to be found in his statement that 'an imitation of the world with its seven divisions *(sapta dvīpa)*' has been made madatory in the realm of drama.[6]

These observations, though made in respect of the drama, are equally applicable to other literary forms, for in Bharata's time, as in Aristotle's, the literary genres were not sharply differentiated; all were covered by the blanket term *kāvya* (poetry).[7]

Simiraly, almost all the proponents of literary propriety refer to social customs and conventions to elucidate their notion of propriety. Thus Kṣemendra, the foremost advocate of this concept in India, illustrates the improper use of figures of speech *(alaṁkāra)* and stylistic merits *(guṇas)* by drawing examples directly from his social milieu :

> 'Who would not suffer mockery by (putting on) the girdle-string around the neck, the radiant necklace around the waist, the anklets on hands, the bracelets on feet, and (by showing) might 'against the prostrated and compassion towards foes? Similarly, neither figures of speech nor the merits look charming without propriety'.[8]

Likewise George Puttenham, who devotes two chapters in his *Arte of English Poesie* (*c.* 1965) to the exposition of the concept propriety, draws all his illustrations from his social ethos.[9] In fact, there is hardly any discussion of literary propriety which is not linked up, directly or indirectly, with social propriety.

The propounders of the concept of propriety are one in

regarding the world as their criterion. Bharata insists that 'playwrights and producers *(prayokṛ)* should take the people as their authority (as regards the rules of the art).'[10] Aristotle suggests that 'the poet should remember to put the actual scenes as far as possible before his eyes.'[11] Horace, too, lays down that 'the experienced poet, as an imitative artist, should look to human life and character for his model.'[12] His statement, incidentally, bears out the truth of the earlier observation that the theory of 'imitation' in itself subsumes the idea of social propriety.

However, this emphasis on following or 'imitating' the external world does not imply that literature is a photocopy of real life. What is intended is resemblance, not identity, with life. As Aristotle makes it clear, literature aims at probability rather than actuality :

> 'the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i. e., what is possible as being probable or necessary.'[13]

In fact, literature creates an illusion of reality, and this illusion, to a great extent, is made possible by the application of the concept of propriety. Aristotle's comment on the significance of propriety of style shows how the idea of verisimilitude is inextricably linked with the idea of propriety. An appropriate style, says he, 'invests the subject with persuasive efficacy. For the mind is cheated into a persuasion, that the orator is speaking with sincerity, because under such circumstances men stand affected in *that* manner. So that people suppose things to be even as the speaker states them, what though, in reality, they are not.'[14] Propriety is thus a means to verisimilitude, a device to make a speech or composition convincing and affective. It was probably for this reason that the concept of propriety was originally introduced into literature.

II

The concept of propriety, however, is not easy to define. The Indian poetician Kṣemendra has only this much to say : 'That

which is suited to certain thing is called proper *(ucita)* by the great masters. The state of being proper is propriety *(aucitya)*.'[15] In fact he does nothing more than explain the meaning of the term *aucitya*, which is derived from *ucita* (proper or suitable). Nor does George Puttenham make it any clearer when he states that 'this comelynesse resteth in the good conformitie of many things and their sundry circumstances, with respect one to another, so as there be found a just correspondencie between them by this or that relation.'[16] They provide only vague hints and general directions. But, then, they are not to blame, for it is in the nature of this concept that it cannot be reduced to any codification. The norms of propriety are various and variable; they differ not only from time to time or place to place but also from person to person. It is impossible to formulate any criteria of propriety, except by way of broad indications, which are universally and uniformally applicable. Given a proper context, even a defect, as Bhāmaha points out, becomes a virtue :

> 'Some objectionable (words) attain a grace on account of the place they occupy: just as collyrium, which is really dirt, when applied to the eyes of a beautiful damsel.'[17]

Daṇḍin even goes to extent of saying that all kinds of blemishes may be turned into beauties or merits by the skill of a competent poet.[18] Thus the concept of propriety, as S. K. De rightly observes, is 'incapable of formal treatment.'[19] But this should not be taken as a sign of its weakness, for, as J. C. La Driére remarks, 'its very obdurate abstractness, its resistance to assimilation by any particular context and its consequent elasticity in application to all contexts, explains its hardy persistence, and its permanent value, as an ultimate principle for aesthetic judgment.'[20]

The jndgment of what is proper or improper in a particular situation is best to be left to the discretion of the competent reader. He differs from an ordinary reader in as much as he is required to possess certain distinctive qualities. According to George Puttenham, he should be a man of vast experience and knowledge, 'one who can make the best and most differences of

things by reasonable and wittie distinction.'[21] The Indian poeticians refer to him as *sahṛdaya.* He is characterized by Abhinavagupta as 'one whose constant engagement with literature has made his mind a clear mirror and who has developed a capacity for identification with the subject-matter of a literary work and with the heart of the writer.'[22] Such a capacity, however, 'is vouchsafed only to the fit and few.'[23], and may be regarded as the mark of an ideal reader. But every competent reader must possess at least what Rājaśekhara calls *bhāvāyitrī pratibhā*'[24], the sympathetic imagination that reveals the underlying import of a creative work or an author.

III

The inherent indefiteness and variability of the concept of propriety makes it most difficult to use as a criterion of literary judgement. The history of western criticism amply demonstrates how easily it can be misused or misunderstood. First, there is the danger of mixing up or equating literary propriety with social or ethical propriety. Even in Aristotle, as George Saintsbury observes, 'we have rules for its attainment, some ehical rather than aesthetic.'[25] By the time we reach Horace this tendency bccomes even more pronounced. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, 'decorum of Horace is something affectively and socially-oriented towards the taste and standards of the aristocratic theater audience of his day.'[26] In fact, the distinction between social and aesthetic considerations is often so blurred in literary discussions of propriety that it becomes difficult to ascertain whether it 'refers to something intrinsic to nature of things or something established by human convention.'[27]

As hinted earlier, in Western criticism the concept of propriety branched off into two directions—nature and convention, which sometimes worked jointly and sometimes severally. And in both cases it has done more harm than good. There are numerous instances in which a literary work or an author has been condemned on the grounds of prevailing social or ethical standards. Similarly, current literary fashions and conventions have been used as norms of propriety. During the Neoclassical period,

for instance, 'propriety' was employed 'in the sense of elegance and correct taste, a propriety that avoided the vulgar as well as the unconventional.'[28] Dr. Johnson rejected *Lycidas* simply because 'its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting.'[29] Obviously, such a narrow and preconceived notion of propriety had had a crippling effect on the growth of genuine literature; 'it subdued', as R.A. Scott-James remarks, 'the noblest minds to the orthodox pattern of tameness, and correctness, and an outward show of elegance, dignity, proportion, moderation.'[30] The critics who criticized others for want of propriety did not rcalize that their own criterion of propriety could be improper. For, as Lord David Cecil rightly observes, the 'so-called laws of art are only tentative generalizations drawn from the observation of particular works; and cannot completely apply to any original work.'[31] This is also the reason why 'writers in any age who depart radically from accepted conventions are likely to be judged indecorous by their contemporaries.'[32]

The concept of nature as a norm of propriety has also not fared any better. On the one hand we have Dr. Johnson who equates it with commonsense and condemns *Lycidas* for its failure to conform to our experience of actual life[33], and on the other, we have Pope who identifies it with the idea of antiquity and exhorts the prospective writer to follow the ancient 'rules.[34] These almost contradictory views are reconciled through a specious argument which is beautifully summed up by Lascelles Abercrombie :

> 'First follow Nature'; but to learn how to do this, study the Ancients. For the Ancients were at one with Nature; Nature and the Poetry of Antiquity are the same. But also to study the Ancients is to study art that always accords with reason : the lesson of antiquity is that poetry must obey the rules which reason prescribes. How is this? The answer is...Nature hereself is reasan.[35]

I have quoted this piece of dialectic jugglery only to show how concepts like 'nature' can be misconstrued and distorted to suit one's taste. It is not surprising, therefore, that the notion

of propriety has more often than not been misused and misinterpreted. The history of western criticism offers sufficient documentary evidence of how the principle of propriety 'can atrophy and become mechanical in its application.'[36]

IV

One need not, however, dismiss the concept of propriety as baneful or deleterious. The Indian experience shows that it can be applied in literary criticism without any, harm or disadvantage.

The Indian approach to the concept of propriety avoids many traps and pitfalls that waylaid the western approach. For onething, it does not allow social, ethical or other extraneous considerations to enter into its deliberations of propriety; they have been conducted almost exclusively, on an aesthetic or literary plane. Indian poeticians have always considered propriety in relation to poetic or artistic beauty, and their criteria of judgement, however variable, are essentially aesthetic. Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin refer to it in connection with poetic blemishes and merits; Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta deal with it in the context of *rasa;* and Kṣemendra considers it in respect of twenty-seven points or parts of a literary composition. Kuntaka and Mahimabhaṭṭa, too, discuss it in a purely literary context.[37] Even when a question of social propriety is raised, the underlying consideration is unmistakably aesthetic. For instance, Kṣemendra objects to the depiction of erotic love between Śiva and Pārvati in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasaṁbhava* (Canto VIII)[38] not simply because it is socially unbecoming but because, as Abhinavagupta points out, it is aesthetically revolting; it is as repulsive as the description of love-making between one's parents.[39] The question of propriety in Indian poetics is thus basically an aesthetic issue.

In fact, the idea of propriety in Indian poetics is closely connected with the idea of the 'soul' (*atman*) or essence of poetry. Indian poeticians have, from the very beginning, tried to discover that vital element without which poetry, however technically perfect, becomes as worthless as a body without the soul. The concepts like *rasa, alaṁkāra, rīti-guṇa, dhvani, vakrokti* and *camatkāra* are just the by products of this quest.[40] And it is always

from the stand-point of one of these concepts that the question of propriety has been considered. Of these, however, two concepts—*rasa* and *camatkāra* have played a major role. They have been advanced by two leading exponents of propriety in Indian poetics—Ānandvardhana and Kṣemendra, respectively. According to the former, anything that hampers the realization of *rasa*—be it *alaṁkāra, guṇa* or *rīti*—is improper, and all that contributes to the fruition of *rasa* is proper.[41] Expanding his idea Abhinavagupta says :

> *Aucitya* (propriety) presupposes something in relation to which a thing is *ucita* (proper), and that in regard to which everything else is finally to be estimated as *ucita* is *rasa*, the 'soul' of poetry.[42]

Kṣemendra, while acknowledging the supremacy of *rasa*, seems to prefer *camatkāra* as the norm of propriety.[43] Abhinavagupta, too, tacitly endorses his view when he mentions lack of *camatkāra* (*kaścamatkārāvakāśah*) as an additional reason for the impropriety of depicting love between gods and goddesses.[44] He has, however, his greatest ally in Panditrāja Jagannāth who considers *camatkāra* as the sole attribute of poetry.[45]

Camatkāra, in fact, is a more comprehensive term than *rasa*. It implies 'a sudden fillip to any feeling of a pleasurable type.'[46] According to Jagannātha, *camatkāra* is the supermundane artistic delight brought about by the contemplation of beauty.[47] Though *rasa* is also of the nature of *camatkāra*,[48] *camatkāra* is by no means confined to *rasa*. As Ramaranjan Mukherji rightly observes, 'it refers to delight, that arises in the mind of an appreciator on reading a poem, and as such, comprehends all the poetical elements—*Guṇa. Alaṁkāra, Rīti, Vṛtti, Dhvani* and *Rasa*.'[49] *Camatkāra*, thus, provides a better and broader criterion of propriety than *rasa* and may almost be universally applied.

Though Indian poeticians have been able to find out a definite and stable criterion of propriety, they have never made any attempt to legislate or lay down rules. Bharata states clearly :

> Rules regarding the feelings and activites of the world moveable as well as immoveable cannot be formulated (lit., ascertained) exhaustively by the Śāstra.[50]

Kṣemendra, too, gives only examples of how an utterance could be proper or improper in a given context. and admits openly that his treatment is not exhaustive : a reader will have to use his discretion.[51] This freedom, however, does not amount to licentiousness, for there are always tangible aesthetic criteria to judge with.

Indian aestheticians have not been bothered with concepts like 'nature' and 'convention', for they never confused literature with life. A poet is conceived here as *Prajāpati* (the Creator) who creates an independent world of his own.[52] Bharata, too, acknowledges the separate status of a literary work when he mentions two styles of composition—*nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī*.[53] In fact, Indian poeticians have always been clear in their view that literature aims at verisimilitude in order to realize *rasa* or *camatkāra*, which alone is its true object. Propriety, too, is intended to serve the same purpose.

When Kṣemendra propounded his theory of propriety, there were already a number of literary theories in the field, each claiming for itself the prerogative of being the 'soul' of poetry. His real contribution lies not in introducing another new theory but in demonstrating that no literary theory can be regarded as absolute, not even the theory of *rasa*. All theories are only relatively valid; their chief merit depends on the appropriateness of their application. Though earlier poeticians like Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, Kuntaka and Ānandavardhana had also underscored this fact, it was left to Kṣemendra to bring this idea to the foreground. He established, with copius examples, the relativity of all critical theories. And his proposition has stood the test of time, for, as B. Lukyanov observes, the 'history of aesthetics shows, too, that attempts to find a single, all-embracing criterion invariably produce results that are less than satisfactory.'[54]

Indian poetics never recognised propriety as an end in itself or a virue to be cultivated for its own sake, though, at the same time, it was accorded the highest place in aesthetic considerations by all theoreticians, even by those—such as Ānandavardhana and Kuntaka—who propounded rival or different theories. It was regarded as *sine qua non* of all literary theories, something

without which no theory, however competent, could succeed.[55] It also serves as a kind of warning to all theorists against being dogmatic about their theories or applying them mechanically.[56]

It is as a guiding principle, not as a critical theory, that the concept of propriety can gainfully be used. Indian poeticians had realized this very well; their treatment of propriety is illustrative rather than prescriptive. We may learn from them the way the concept of propriety ought to be employed in literary discourse.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. These English terms have been suggested by George Puttenham. See his *The Art of English Poesie*, ed. C. D. Willcock and A. Walker (Cambridge : At the University Press, 1936; rpt. 1970), p. 262. Other English terms used to express this concept include 'propriety', 'aptness', 'appropriateness', 'fitness', 'conformity', 'correctness', etc.
2. A brief historical account of the concept of propriety in Western poetics may be found in the entry on 'Decorum' in *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger (Macmillan, 1979), pp. 187-88. A similar, though much more detailed, account of this concept in Indian poetics is available in V. Raghavan's article, 'History of *Aucitya* in Sanskrit Poetics', in his *Studies on Some Concepts of Alaṃkārā Śāstra* (Madras : The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1973), pp. 241-81.
3. *Cf. Dictionary of World Literature*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley (Peterson, New Jersey : Littlefield, Adams & Company, 1962): 'Of possible objective norms of fitness [i.e., propriety] the only sources are evidently (1) nature (2) convention or custom...' (p. 160).
4. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, tr. Manomohan Ghosh (Calcutta : The Royal Asistic Society, 1950) I, 111. All subsequent references are to this edition.
5. *Ibid.*, I, 106.
6. *Ibid.*, I, 118.
7. Cf. Bhāmaha (*Kāvyālaṁkāra*, I, 16) who says that 'Word and

meaning constitute poetry' (*śabdārthau sahitau kāvyam*); also Hemacandra, *Kāvyānuśāsana* (New Delhi, 1986, p. 379) : *kāvyaṁ prekṣyaṁ śravyaṁ ca.*

8. *Aucityavicāracarcā*, ed. with Sanskrit and Hindi commentaries by Acharya Sri Vrajmohan Jha (Varanasi : Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, 1982), p. 6. An English translation of this work is included in Dr. Suryakanta's *Kṣemendra Studies* (Poona : Oriental Book Agency, 1954).
9. See Book III, Chaps. XXIII–XXIIII.
10. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, XXVI, 126.
11. Aristotle, *On the Art of Poetry*, tr. Ingram Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 60-61.
12. *On the Art of Poetry* in *Classical Literary Criticism*, tr. T. S. Dorsch (Penguin Books, 1965), p. 90.
13. *On the Art of Poetry*, p. 43.
14. *Aristotle's Treatise on Rhetoric*, tr. Theodore Buckley (London : Bell & Daldy, 1872), p. 224.
15. *Aucityavicāracarcā*, p. 7 :

    Ucitam prāhurācāryāḥ sadṛśaṁ *kil* yasya yad,
    Ucitasya ca yo bhāvastadaucityaṁ pracakṣate.

16. *The Arte of English Poesie*, p. 262.
17. *Kāvyālaṁkāra*, I, 55.
18. *Kāvyādarśa*, IV, 179 :

    Virodaḥ sakalo'pyeṣa kadācit kavikauśalāt,
    Utkramya doṣagaṇanāṁ gunavīthiṁ vigāhate.

19. *History of Sanskrit Poetics* (Calcutta : Firma K. L. Mukhopadyay, 1960), II, 285.
20. 'Fitness', *Dictionary of World Literature*, p. 160.
21. *The Arte of English Poesie*, p. 263.
22. *Locana* on *Dhvanyaloka*, I, 1 (*Vṛtti*) : 'Yeṣāṁ kāvyānuśīlanābhyasavaśād viśadibhūte manomukure varṇanīyatanmayībhavanayogyatā te svahṛdayasaṁvādabhājaḥ sahṛdayāḥ.'
23. S. K. De, *History of Sanskrit Poetics*, II. 215 n. Krishna Rayan, in his article. 'The Competent Reader' (*Journal of Literary Criticism*, II, 2, 3) argues that such a reader does not exist. His 'reading of the texts in a literary system', he observes, 'results in the reader assimilating the implicit

conventions, codes and rules of the system and forming within himself certain expectations or potential responses which are satisfied, violated, deferred, or altered during his reading of the next text. He thus brings to his encounter with each fresh text a mind which is far from vacant and is instead filied with certain expectations.' His argument is quite convincing but it does not invalidate Abhinavagupta's statement which presents an ideal that is still worth aspiring for. The extent to which he is able to efface himseif—to shed his preconceptions and prejudices—is the measure of his comptence as a reader. This view is also supported by Lord David Cecil who, in his essay, 'The Fine Art of Reading', puts us 'on our guard against starting to read any book with a preconceived idea of what it ought or ought not to be like' (*English Critical Essays*, 20th Century, Second Series, O. U. P., 1961, p. 186).

24. *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, ed. Dr. Gangasagar Rai (Varanasi : Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, 1964), p. 34 : 'bhāvakasyopakurvāṇā bhāvayitrī/sāhi kaveḥ śramamabhiprāyaṁ bhāvayati.'
25. *A history of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe* (Edinburgh & London : William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1949), I, 46.
26. *Literary Criticism : A Short History* (Calcutta : Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1964), p. 83.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
28. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, p. 187.
29. 'John Milton', *Lives of the English Poets* (London : J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1961), I, 96.
30. *The Making of Literature* (London : Secker & Warburg, 1958), p. 129.
31. 'The Fine Art of Reading'. *English Critical Essays*, 20th Century, 2nd Series (O. U. P., 1961), p. 186.
32. *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms*, ed. Roger Fowler (London & Boston : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 48.
33. *Lives of the English Poets*, pp. 95-96 : 'Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough *satyrs* and *fauns with cloven heels*. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.'

Bharata would have raised no such objections, for he recognised both literary conventions (*nāṭyadharmī*) and naturalness (*lokadharmī*).

34. *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 139-40 :

    Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem :
    To copy Nature is to copy them.

35. *Principles of literary Criticism* (Bombay : Vora & Co., 1958), p. 141. The argument is originally Pope's.
36. *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms*, p. 48.
37. For details, see Chandrahans Pathak, *Aucitya-saṁpradāya kā Hindī kāvyaśāstra par prabhāva* (Varanasi . Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, 1967), chap. II.
38. *Aucityavicāracarcā*, p. 26. The *śloka* referred to means : 'Then Śiva at that time, with his eyes attracted by the line of marks of scratches by nails at the upper part of Pārvati's loins, stopped his beloved (Pārvati) from tying her loosened garments.'
39. *Locana* on *Dhvanyāloka*, III, 6 (*Vṛtti*) : 'Uttamadevatāsaṁbhogaparāmarśe ca pitṛsaṁbhoga iva lajjātaṅkādinā kaścamatkārāvakāśaḥ.'
40. For details, see Jayamanta Misra, *Kāvyātma-mīmāṁsā* (Varanasi : Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan, 1964).
41. *Dhvanyāloka*, III, 14 (Vṛttic); also III, 32.
42. *Locana* on *Dhvanyāloka* I, 2 (*Vṛtti*) : 'ucitaśabdena rasaviṣayamevaucityaṁ bhavatīti darśayan rasadhvaneḥ jīvitatvaṁ sūcayati.'
43. *Aucityavicāracarcā*, p. 2 : 'aucityasya camatkārakāriṇaścārucarvaṇe'. This view is also supported by the fact that Kṣemendra devotes the third chapter of his *Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa* to the discussion of *camatkāra* and its ten kinds. He declares here openly that 'bereft of *camatkāra*, a poet is no poet, nor a poem a poem' (III, 1).
44. Cited above under reference no. 39.
45. See *Rasagaṅgādhara*, I, 1.
46. V. Raghavan, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
47. *Rasagaṅgādhara*, I, 1 (*Vṛtti*) : 'lokottaratvaṁ cāhlādagataḥ camatkāraparaparyāḥ anubhavasākṣiko jātiviśeṣaḥ.'

48. This is the view expressed by Abhinavagupta. See his *Locana* (III, 6, *Vṛtti*) : 'āsvādayitṛṇāṁ yaḥ camatkārāvighātasadeva rasasarvasvaṁ āsvādāyattatvāt'.
49. *Literary Criticism in Ancient India* (Calcutta : Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1966), p. 24.
50. *Nāṭyaśāstra*, XXVI, 125.
51. *Aucityavicāracarcā*, p. 187 : 'anyeṣu kavyāṅgeṣvanayaiva diśā svayamaucityamutprekṣaṇīyam'.
52. Cf. Ānandavardhana, *Dhvanyāloka*, III, 42 (*Vṛtti*) :
    Apāre kāvyasaṁsāre kavirekaḥ prajāpatiḥ,
    Yathāsmai rocate viśvaṁ tathedaṁ parivartate.
53. *Nāṭyaśāstra* (GOS), XXI, 203 :
    Lokadharmī bhavettvanyā nāṭyadharmī tathāparā,
    Svabhāvo lokadharmī tu vibhavo nāṭyameva hi.
54. 'Criteria of Aesthetic Evaluation', *Marxist-Leninist Aesthetics and Life* (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1976), p. 78.
55. See the diagram given by S. Kuppuswami Sastri in his *Highways and Byways of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit* (Madras, 1945, p. 27), which represents *aucitya* as the underlying principle of all Indian critical theories. He also quotes a Sanskrit verse (*Aucitīmanudhāvanti sarve dhvanirasonnayāḥ* ..) which conveys almost the same idea.
56. This is a point which is emphasized also by T. S. Eliot in his definition of a true critic. 'The true critic', he writes in *Knowledge and Experience* (London, 1964, p. 164), is a scrupulous avoider of formulae; he refrains from statements which pretend to be literally true; he finds fact nowhere and approximation always. His truths are truths of experience rather than of calculation.'

Sisirkumar Ghose

INDIAN POETICS AND WESTERN LITERATURE

I speak with hesitation and humility, as who would not, speaking on a subject so vast, complex, for the most part unexplored, so full of pitfalls? Indian Poetics and Western Literature is a theme worthy of years of research and re-education, a subject with an almost inexhaustible potentiality. But let me not be too modest. The amateur is not wholly a *śudra* and one's personal limitation is less important than the awareness of the problem, the need for a larger perspective. At last we are waking up and, if our labours force us to face the sheer relevance of the theme, that will not be a bad thing. The need for dialogue has expressed itself on many fronts. As Krishna Chaitanya put it : 'It does seem worth-while in the circumstances to make a fresh attempt to communicate the ideas of the great Indian thinkers to the English-speaking world which is perhaps half the world today.'[1] Yes, but this will not be an annexe to national propaganda or, as in Krishna Chaitanya's own case, an obsessive search for 'extraordinary parallelisms.' That way our gain is likely to be minimal. The work has to be done in terms of a wider horizon *as well as* rootedness. The exercise will be valuable for the balance, adventure and the sense of direction it is bound to give to the present, mostly inchoate efforts. The attempt to mediate between foreign fields and thc native ground will at once help to define our role. Nearly a century back Matthew Arnold had required that 'every critic should try and possess one great literature at least besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better'. In that case the Indian student of western humanities has his task cut out for him. (The recent passion for comparative literature is in many ways a good thing. Unfortunately, decadence is what most comparatists seem to know and care for.) The task, however, is not purely academic or intellectual. It is a question of the quality of our life and what we are going to

do about it, and surveying the entire field of Indian poetics is not all that there is to it. In any case, before communicating the ideas of the great Indian thinkers to others it will be advisable to assimilate these within our own system. Otherwise the area is so large that one may stray too far away or get bogged by pedantic irrelevances. What, therefore, for reasons of convenience, I shall do is to refer to a few key ideas of Indian aesthetics and give *only one example* of the application of these ideas to western literature as a pointer or paradigm. This is obviouly not enough. I hope others will readily fill up the blanks, for the blanks are bound to be there. In commuting between the two, Indian poetics and western literature, from *Odyssey* to *Dr. Zhivago*, from *Divina Commedia* to *Les Fleurs du Mal*, from Sappho to Sartre there are not a few countries of the mind to explore, to make one's own. No one working in this field need fear unemployment.

Literature is part of a larger pattern whose name is culture. In a One-World world culture is not a one-way or even a two-way traffic. The sensitivity with which we can relate opposites, *enantiodromia*, may be our only strategy against the internecine disvalues of the day. In such a context, to say that East is East and West is West is simply to hide one's head in the sand. Not either/or but both is the imperative of our times. This does not mean that we rush towards easy equations or, worse, play variations on a belated *Herrenvolk*. To be content with the simple idea that our own past or culture can provide all the values, all the answers that we need is no longer possible. We cannot be ourselves alone. Indian poetics is not a cure-all. We cannot overlook the disparates in experience, or run down the new element which the uneasy, mobile modern world has introduced. One may even learn from the differences, such as these are. Old insight, in so far as it is only old, cannot be adequate for the agonies of the lost and the disinherited, the present incertitudes as well as possibilities. Many things have happened since the good old days and these cannot be neatly put into the strait jacket of *śāstras*, however liberal. Yet differences are not final, not the heart of the matter. Art, Stephen Spender had once

said, is a Hindu temple where many gods co-exist. Not only co-exist but also cross-fertilise. The amours of the gods should make one hopeful!

I

It is vain to think that we can understand Indian culture, its motives and its potencies without a familiarity with and an inner feeling for the Indian arts, their theory and practice. But Indian arts and poetics lead in different directions, with specialists ready to pounce on the unwary amateur. The specialists deserve respect for the manner in which they have garnered and guarded their knowledge. But, as a rule, the pundit tends to be parochial and fails to relate or provide the link with our own times. He is also likely to be innocent of western literature or terribly naïve. Unless we admit this fact—there are exceptions no doubt—we shall not be able to define our task. If we want the creative waters to flow again we must distinguish between the essential and the inessential, both in the lexicon and in life. Else we will be swamped by details. There are so many schools or approaches, each with its own special theory, emphasis and vocabulary : the Vedantic, Tantric, Buddhist, Yoga, Sankhya, Vaishnava, etc. The demands of life and expanding experience are no less manifold. Unless we are to lose our way we must make some choice. For our purpose we shall choose only one basic, psychological insight characteristic of the Indian experience. The emphasis on psychology is justified. As Pravas Jivan Chaudhuri, in his essay on 'Aesthetic Metaphysics', has pointed out : 'Now this Indian theory is more a psychology of artistic experience rather than a philosophy of beauty.'[2] It was, at the same time, he adds, a 'psychology of emotion valid both in life and art'. In other words, a unified theory.

But what was its nature, what was it about? As expected, it dealt with the nature or ground of Being and Consciousness, that is, it had obvious ontological implications. I shall confine myself to three aspects of this basic insight. First, delight or Delight. The ancient Indian idea is absolutely true, says Sri Aurobindo, that delight, Ānanda, is the inmost expressive and creative

nature of the Spirit. This idea of the creative delight of the free spirit has often been mistranslated in western thought as pleasure. The misunderstanding is due to—and this is the second aspect of the insight—an inability to distinguish between two levels of being, the substitution of the profundities of soul-culture by the superficialities of a sensate culture, in brief, the difference between the secular and the spiritual. In the early days the theory of the two souls—Goethe's *Zwei Seelen* and Shelley's 'being within being'—the desire soul and the true psychic being was admitted. This psychic postulate was a discovery, or event, essentially renewable. As Whitehead once said, 'The fertilisation of the soul is the reason for the necessity of art.' A third, ancillary but no less necessary distinction was the idea of the Witness Self, *sākṣi puruṣa*, common to Yoga, Upanishad, as well as the canons of art, the *śilpa śāstras*. The Witness Self was regarded as the ideal spectator, *ab extra*, the realiser of world-experience. This triad—the free, delight self, the soul and the witness self—remains a more or less permanent feature of the Indian view of the arts. Its time-transcending stance is explained by virtue of the fact that aesthetic experience is taken to be a-logical and non-empiric, not time's fool, but as it were beyond time, *kālātīta*.

How have these insights been re-interpreted in our own times and applied to literature other than our own? That is another story, not altogether happy. Yet there are indications and one can learn even from missed chances. Among work needing to be done are reliable translations of ancient texts. These will include the clarification of concepts—such as *vāk*, *rasa*, *alaukika*, *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, *ananyāparatantra*, *sahṛdaya*, *śānta*, *dhvani*, *pratibhā*, *tanmayibhāvanā*, to mention only a few. Incidentally, to admit Sanskrit poetics to a universe of discourse on a par with other disciplines is not to canvass for its theology or the sociological ethos in which it functioned. This, an unfounded fear, haunts some of our humanists who are put out by the faintest hint of anything 'meta'.

Regarding the application of ideas to other culture contexts or unfamiliar forms of art, I should like to mention one example. In the west tragedy has always held the highest rank among the

literary genres and well it might. But of late we have been hearing of 'beyond tragedy'. Indians are not unfamiliar with the existential and tragic fragility of life, the sense of doom or fate (*adṛṣṭa*) overhanging our experience of the world. But from the earliest times Indians have developed a strategy to contain the tragic schedule. The idea of the world as a play, of surplus energy, seems to have acted as a counter-offensive against the tragic invasion. To these have been added the notion of transmigration, *karma* and an epic undertone of heroic activism, not merely for the warrior class but for all men engaged in the battle of life. In this view the performance of one's duty, in a spirit of detachment (the distancing of pain), is a joy, as in Rama's cheerful choice of exile in the forest, or Krishna's exhortations to Arjuna. Even death has no sting, since it may not be a terminus but a process and a programme. In this attitude there is no escape from facts, from dignity or honour. The containing or transformation of the tragic is always a test. Thanks to the inwardness of Indian values, works of art, we are always told, are to be realised and relished as *dhiyālambas*, supports for contemplation, or, to use Denis de Rougemont's phrase, as traps for meditation. Thus treated, even tears become tears of joy. Lear and Hamlet are gay, wrote Yeats in a Nietzschean vein. In Shankara's *Shiva Strota* we have an archetypal image of the terrible turning into the numinous. It is a pity that with such a point of view readily available no Indian scholar has so far done a serious study on tragedy, Greek or otherwise. The books such as exist are written either in yesterday's borrowed idiom or, if the writer is young, today's, a macro-mimetic waste of spirit. This is hardly to be wondered at. Our museum universities have been accredited seats of uncritical thinking, wholly unrelated with our real needs.

II

But there are exceptions. I shall mention the exceptional but encouraging work of one who turned his back, in middle years, upon college teaching. Sri Aurobindo's *The Future Poetry*, remains an outstanding, yet for the most part unrecognised, work

of seminal criticism that modern India has thrown up. The occasion was almost casual. The book grew out of a review of James Cousins' *New Ways in English Literature.* Unlike Coomaraswamy, who readily quotes chapter and verse from traditional, scholastic and mediaeval sources for both evidence and argument, as though all questions have been settled for ever, Sri Aurobindo does not refer too much or at all to literary canons. With his nimble intuition he fixes on just a few essential insights, in his case usually having affinity with the Vedic or Upanishadic, and utilises them, in a grand manner, in expounding cycles of experience, and a body of literature utterly dissimilar to the source of his value or insights. The way he ranges and relates is a mark of his capacious, orchestral mind. The whole thing is done with an ease and an assurance, fairness, constant elevation which ties up with his other major works. Even if a *tour de force*, it was for him the natural thing to do, a rare example of rediscovered tradion and individual talent.

True, he is a man with a thesis. (Pray, who is not?). And what is that thesis? To Sri Aurobindo James Cousins' small book had suggested one possibility above every other, the possibility of what he has called *mantra* in poetry, something distantly analogous to what Abbé Bremond called prayer, and others incantation, or the Revolution of the Word. This master idea he deploys with a firm, flexible determination to the course of English poetry, a daring thing to do. For this undertaking he depends on a view of poetry, as he is fully aware vastly different from the fashionable models. Undaunted, Sri Aurobindo pins his faith in the power of the rhythmic word for the expression of our soul-vision and world vision. Vision, evolving vision, is his source and goal. The intensity of the movement of poetry comes from the stress of the soul-vision behind the word. It is, as he says, 'the spiritual excitement of a rhythmic voyage of self-discovery among the magic islands of form and name in these inner and outer worlds.'[3]

The visionary voyage, towards self-discovery, is not without laws and gradations of its own. He refers to a force of vital style, emotional style, intellectual style, also a force of the higher

spiritual imagination. But beyond these stands a still higher style of poetry to which we have to climb. 'This intensity belongs to no particular style, depends on no conceivable formula of diction...it is not a style, but poetic style itself, the Word; it creates and carries with it its elements rather than is created by them.'[4] Among these elements of highest poetic utterance is vision : 'Vision is the characteristic power of the poet' [5], says Sri Aurobindo, echoing the time-honoured Indian idea of the *Kavi* as seer (*draṣṭā*). 'Sight is the essential poetic gift.'[6] Contrary to misconceptions, Sri Aurobindo does *not* want the poet to be necessarily a philosopher, prophet or preacher. According to him, it is not necessary for the poet to have an intellectual philosophy, a message for humanity, or a solution of the problems of the age, a mission to improve the world, 'to leave the world better than he found it'. These superficial indices and functions are not the heart of the matter. For Sri Aurobindo 'The poetic vision of life is not a critical or intellectual or philosophic view of it, but a soul-view, a seizing by the inner sense; and the Mantra is not in its substance or form poetic enunciation of a philosophic truth, but the rhythmic revelation or intuition arising out of the soul's sight of God and Nature and the world and the inner truth—occult to the outward eye—of all that peoples it, the secrets of their life and being.'[7]

The soul-view is not a static view, and not be confused with fixed religious dogmas of the past. Here Sri Aurobindo springs another surprise of proof of his originality. Sri Aurobindo is an evolutionary seer, a fact still missed by many. Poetry, he says, evolves. 'The poetic vision, like everything else, follows necessarily the evolution of the human mind and according to the age and environment, it has its levels, its ascents and descents and its returns.'[8] To illustrate the thesis Sri Aurobindo chooses the history of English poetry, with many a side glance on the Continental, with which he is of course perfectly familiar. This revised history of English poetry forms the main body of the text in *The Future Poetry*. We give below one of the many *apercus*, on how (he thinks) English poetry has followed the successive steps of the natural ascending order of our developing

perceptions or consciousness.

'It began by a quite external, a clear and superficial substance and utterance. It proceeded to a deeper vital poetry, a poetry of the power and beauty and wonder and spontaneous thought, the joy and passion and pain, the colour and music of Life, in which the external presentation of life and things was taken up, but exceeded and given its full dynamic and imaginative content. From that it turned to an attempt at mastering the secret of the Latins, the secret of a clear, measured and intellectual dealing with life, things and ideas. Then came an attempt, a brilliant and beautiful attempt, to get through Nature and thought and the mentality in life and Nature and their profounder aesthetic suggestion to certain spiritual truths behind them. This attempt could not come to perfect fruition, partly because there had not been the right intellectual preparation or a sufficient basis of spiritual knowledge and experience and only so much could be given as the solitary individual intuition of the poet could by a sovereign effort attain, partly because after the lapse into an age of reason the spontaneous or the intenser language of spiritual poetry could not always be found or, if found, could not be securely kept. So we get a deviation into another age of intellectual, artistic or reflective poetry with a much wider range, but less profound in its roots, less high in its growth; and partly out of this, partly by a recoil from it has come the turn of recent and contemporary poetry which seems at last to be approaching the secret of the utterance of profounder truth with its right magic of speech and rhythm.'[9] *Multum in parvo* !

Such is the general survey at its most general. *The Future poetry* is scattered with perceptive suggestions and judgments, aphoristic no less than exploratory and expository. We shall refer to a few, restricting ourselves to romantic poetry and the romantic poets.

As we have seen, the Aurobindean view is based on a dynamic psychology of Being and though he does not mention Kierkegaard—then little heard of, anyway—he fixes upon subjectivity as the mark of the modern. Distinguishing between the older and the newer subjectivity, he points to the greater emphasis

on the subjective personality of the modern poets : 'The self of the creator very visibly overshadows the work, is seen everywhere like the conscious self of Vedanta both containing and inhabiting all his creations'.[10] The comparison cuts both ways, and he does not hesitate to say that in minute psychological observations—in reality, door of escape from surface reality—the moderns surpass the previous ages. But where will this psychological process *lead*? According to the Aurobindean hypothesis it is likely to lead to the rediscovery of the soul. This connects, in his mind, with another feature of the modern consciousness : its futurism, 'an insistent interest in future man'.[11] Never has the past counted for so little, says the sage of to-morrow. His other suggestion that modern writers are 'passionately occupied by the idea of things beyond'[12] may not immediately ring true. But the way psychological events have replaced simple events in modern literature and the arts would seem to lend support to what he says.

So much by way of general observation. We may now pass on to one or two critical opinions on individual poets. Neither Byron nor Wordsworth, says our critic, were poets in the whole grain of their being and temperament. Wanting to be critics of life they made illegitimate demands on their poetry. Byron has paid for his contemporary reputation. As for Wordsworth, he sings too little and states too much, has bouts of indescribably flat passages. Yet, with all his defects, he remains one of the seer-poets, the poet of man's large identity with Nature. Shelley, potentially a greater poet than almost anyone else, does not understand earth-nature enough to transform it. He is too much at war with his time—or at war with life, as Arnold interpreted it—to provide the link, 'fails to make the needed transition and reconciliation'[13] beetween the ideal and the actual. Even in his later poetry, in *Prometheus Unbound*, for instance, one senses an absence of *tapasyā*. This is a bold and pertinent use of one culture-concept to illuminate the situation in another. As for Keats, whose early death, Sri Aurobindo thinks, was the greatest loss in this field of human endeavour, he had not yet found the thing he had to say, not yet seen what he was striving to see. What was that ?

To believe Sri Aurobindo, it was "discovery of the divine Idea, Power and living norm of Beauty which by its breath of delight has created the universe, supports it and moves towards a greater perfection, inspires the harmonies of inward sight and outward form, yearns and strives towards the fullness of its own self-discovery by love and delight. He has found a clue in thought and imagination, but not quite its realisation in the spiritual idea.'[14]

His critique of romantic poetry is always from a relevant focus, also inherently fair, because it is made in terms which include and explain what it discusses better than any other. Without being unduly nationalistic or past-oriented it reveals a 'pitch of consciousness' at once oecumenical and timely. The freedom and fullness of the exposition, its expanding vista, the justice of its approach from a central tradition moving towards the future, the ability to breathe life into stereotyped viewpoints stand out. Instead of writing footnotes to foreign scholarship he has written a new chapter in creative criticism, where others have yet to follow.

It is true we cannot have Sri Aurobindos for the asking. (And a few Indian intellectuals have, or pretend to have, an allergy towards him bordering on the pathological). Of course, it is not necessary to echo Sri Aurobindo's views and valuations. Vision cannot be duplicated or used as a formula. We are not looking for a school of blind sheep but a tone, a further intensity, an inclusive awareness. Here is an *adhikāri*, of unquestioned competence, equally at home in the East and in the West, a distinguished teacher in the aesthetic education of man. Utterly free from all dogmatism, he is unimpressed by either the exclusive prestige of the past or the pride of the present. With his faith in the evolving human whole he has his eyes fixed on the emerging values. He is not at all *śāstra*-bound. Model of a mediator, he remains essentially modest, if not for ever modern. Tolerant as he is of a thousand ways of the spirit, it is not agreement to his views that is at issue. What matters is the cause : mutual understanding. There have been few bridge-builders as competent, as colossal as Sri Aurobindo. Only by walking alongside can we

know and explore the expanding universe he has opened out to us.

To profit from him is to break away from preconceived patterns, to establish relevance in terms of a unified culture, based on deepened need for luminous totality and sense of direction. An adventure of more than ideas, here is or could be a new lease of life for the so-called English-educated. Let us go about it with caution, courage and confidence.

Sanskrit, including its poetics, is not a matter of a dead language or a dead frame of reference. Its real work is to refine, clarify art, life and consciousness and the task is by no means over. The dialogue between the past and the present, the near and the far, can be a prelude to a creative future. Not to learn from Sri Aurobindo's example would to be declare oneself unteachable, a *trahison des clercs.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Sanskrit Poetics*, Preface.
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4. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
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8. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
9. *Ibid*·, p. 59.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
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S. C. Sen Gupta

HAMLET IN THE LIGHT OF INDIAN POETICS

It would be interesting to examine how far Indian poetics—specially the theory of *rasa-dhvani*—may be profitably applied to European literature, particularly to Shakespeare. As an experiment, it may be tested with reference to *Hamlet*, the most complex as also the most controversial of all Shakespeare's plays. There has been no end of writing on *Hamlet*; indeed, the extant *Hamlet* criticism is so enormous that 'a man', said F. P. Wilson, 'who set out to read all the books about *Hamlet*, would have time to read nothing else, not *Hamlet*.'[1] It is worth while considering whether the Indian theory of *rasa* and *dhvani* can throw light on the most variously discussed and never satisfactorily explained problem in Shakespearian drama—the meaning of *Hamlet*, the play, its Prince and its poetry.

I

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is based on the old Hamlet story, and it is in the Revenge tradition in which the best known play, outside his own work, is *The Sphanish Tragedy*. The most striking feature of the story as presented by Shakespeare is that the 'problem of delay' is, in spite of the protests of some dissentient critics, made prominent all through the the play. The Ghost adjures Hamlet to remember him, and later on he returns to whet his son's almost blunted purpose. Hamlet's first reaction to the Ghost's revelation is that 'with wings as swift/As meditation or the thoughts of love', he will 'sweep to [his] revenge' (I. v. 29-31), but afterwards he often accuses himself of 'dull revenge', of 'bestial oblivion'. He does not think that his failure to carry out his mission is due to any external difficulties, for he has not only cause and will but also 'strength, and means,/To do't' (IV. iv. 45). The evidence that Hamlet delays and that he alone is responsible for his remissness is writ so large he that runs that may read it.

There are some other significant changes to which attention may be drawn here. Hamlet's mother is unaware of the cause of her first husband's death. She does not mate with a known murderer, but unlike her counterpart in the original story, she is incapable of redemption. She is amazed, but not penitent, and till the last clings to her partner in adultery and incest. There is a good friend in the old story as well as in Shakespeare, but with a difference. Amleth's friend forewarns him, but Horatio, to whom Shakespeare gives much prominence, does nothing to forward Hamlet's purpose. He is a patient listener but a sceptic who contents himself with laconic comments. It seems that he does not even understand Hamlet's idealism. Just before his death, Hamlet appeals to Horatio to tell his (Hamlet's) story, but even before the dead bodies are removed, he begins to tell it the wrong way. He speaks of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts etc. (V. ii. 395), but not a word of the mission of revenge. The two retainers, who accompanied Hamlet in his English voyage, are old school-fellows, who half-knowingly and half-unknowingly, allow themselves to be used as spies against him. The eavesdropping Counsellor is none other than the father of Ophelia, his lady-love. This shows that even those who should be friendly are unhelpful, and some of them act as tools of his enemy. By means of slight changes here and there, Shakespeare places Hamlet in an alien world; Denmark is, indeed, a prison for him. Incidentally, the way Shakespeare makes these small but significant modifications shows that he was not dealing with 'intractable material' but with a story that he could conveniently reshape to his own purposes.

What was Shakespeare's primary purpose in refashioning an old, barbaric tale and fitting it with a philosophical hero, who loves life and is yet disgusted with it, who has cause and means to act and yet does not? The vast body of *Hamlet* criticism, which has accumulated for more than two hundred and fifty years, may, in a bare summary like the present, be grouped under three heads. There are those who think that Shakespeare was interested in telling a sensational tale, full of queer turns that hold us in suspense, strange juxtapositions and contradictions, which,

although open to objection in a drama of character, are easily admissible in a thrilling story. On this view, Hamlet's inconsistent and incoherent behaviour cannot and need not be explained; it is part of the assumption on which the play rests. But this would not account for its extraordinary vitality. If Shakespeare only wanted to tell an exciting tale, the less Shakespeare he. Another group of critics holds that Shakespeare was primarily a poet who gave enduring expression to some universal sentiments. If, argues C. S. Lewis, these sentiments were expressed in less vivid language, it would be a pedestrian affair and the play would lose its power.[2] Lewis anticipates many probable arguments against this thesis, but he does not see one important point. If the wonderful passages which embody the poetry of this drama are presented as isolated beads away from plot and character, their effect would be materially weakened, and *Hamlet*, once again, would cease to be the great play it is. To the third group belongs the majority of critics who see the play as mainly the portrait of a Prince, whose activity and inacivity, although perplexing, are rooted in character. There are some who say that the Prince's emotions are in excess of the facts or that his problem is a Prince's problem of honour, not the common man's problem of bread and shelter. But in spite of these objections, the Prince continues to haunt us. We seek a clue to his strange inability to do the deed for which he has both will and means. We are baffled but fascinated.

Indian poetics would say that the play enables us to see in its purity a mental state, and Action and Speech and Character are only the means that help us to effect this visualization through a series of indirections. Of these constituents character is more important than others, because it is a Determinant or an Excitant (*vibhāva*) or more correctly, it is what gives emotions, ideas and impulses a local habitation (*ālambana*). But character, it must not be forgotten, is only a means to the end of poetry which is *rasa* or the realization of a mental state.

The permanent mental states, according to Indian poetics, are nine in number—Love, Mirth, Sorrow, Anger, Courage, Fear, Aversion, Wonder, and Serenity. Such a simple classification few

people would accept as adequate, but there is some point in the thesis that poetry is the visualization of a mental state. Keeping as far as we can to the Indian system of criticism, we may say that in *Hamlet* the predominant state is Aversion (*jugupsā*), but it is strengthened and enriched by other mental states, and the total effect is not merely revolting (*bībhatsa*) but tragic— a concept for which there is nothing corresponding in Indian poetics. The state of Aversion is fully revealed to us in all its ramifications, and it is seen in relation to the other states which it overpowers and assimilates. Critics say that the Prince's character is a study in melancholy which produces cynicism and lethargy. But a melancholy cynic would not be expansive to friends and school-fellows, neither would such a Prince warmly accost anybody, far less ordinary sentinels and common players, he would not also have Hamlet's responsiveness to beauty or his noble idealism about his father or his capacity for loving Ophelia more than forty thousand brothers could, and he would not be in continual practice as a fencer. In spite of his lethargy and cynicism, we feel that Ophelia is substantially right when she describes him as 'The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword' (III. i. 160), and Fortinbras sums up our general imperssion when he says at the end of the play that 'he was likely, had he been put on,/To have prov'd most royally' (V. ii. 411-12). Yet equally is it true that he loses all interest in life; the earth becomes a sterile promontory to him, and man delights not him, nor woman neither. It is this mental state rather than a fully drawn, consistent character that we have to conjure up before our mind's eye. His inability to carry out his mission must be viewed as a symptom of a particular state rather than as the effect of a cause. The criterion of our judgement is not so much adequacy of motivation as appropriateness (*aucitya*) in detail.

Shakespeare achieves his effects largely through what Indian poetics calls *dhvani* or the process of using the instruments of expression to project a significance superior to or even the opposite of the surface meaning. *Hamlet* is full of action, but all the actions are intended to bring out the hero's inability to do the right action. Percy Simpson concludes his examination of

the Elizabethan tragedy of revenge with the remark, ' "What is the importance of the Revenge Play ? What did it contribute to English drama?" There is one decisive and satisfying answer : it contributed *Hamlet*.'3 But this is a half-truth, for the theme of revenge is only in the foreground and, ultimately, so incidental that although Hamlet succeeds in killing Claudius, nobody would suggest that he succeeds in his mission. It is significant that though he gloats over the new 'union' he effects between his uncle and his mother, he does not at this crucial moment mention his father at all. When the Ghost commands him to take revenge, he readily agrees, but though he is specifically asked not to contrive anything against his mother, his first reaction is : 'yes, by heaven!/ O most pernicious woman!' (I. v. 104-5), and his resolve to set down his uncle'e villainy in his tables comes as an afterthought.

Indeed, though revenge is the ostensible theme of the play, its real subject is the revulsion caused by a mother's unchastity. Shakespeare expresses this revulsion openly but more significant than this direct statement is the relative unimportance to which the manifest theme is relegated. It is Gertrude's incest and adultery which poison Hamlet's mind and make the fulfilment of the Ghost's mission pointless, for by murdering Claudius, he would not be able to wash out Gertrude's sin. This he does not say directly but it is this meaning that is projected by his sporadic activity, his deep disgust and his subtle but confused logic.

There is something more. The whole world seems sicklied o'er with ghastliness of his mother's shame. The Court of Elsinore, presided over by a drunken, adulterate beast, is peopled by courtiers like the great baby Polonius and the waterfly Osric and by unworthy friends like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and away from the court Hamlet meets Gravediggers who have no feeling about their business as Gertrude had no feeling about hers. The only person who could have weaned him out of his aversion for the world was Ophelia to whom he was passionately devoted, but she too fails him lamentably, for she, too, is of the tribe of Gertrude. In equating Ophelia with Gertrude, Hamlet confuses chalk with cheese, but when we remember the part

played by Ophelia, her unresponsiveness and her lack of understanding, we see the point in Hamlet's bitter comment : '... virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it : ...We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us' (III. i. 119 ff). Time itself is out of joint and it is cursed spite that he was born to set it right. If with such an attitude he could have set his heart on killıng Claudius, his triumph world have been an anti-climax, a paltry sop to his outraged conscience.

It would, therefore, be an over-simplification to suggest that Hamlet is temperamentally a melancholy man prone to be lapsed in time and passion. He has a Renaissance hero's love for the good things of life; he is physically vigorous and mentally agile and also full of moral idealism. The Ghost's revelation has an unsettling effect on his mind which has already been soured by his mother's conduct, but even after this revelation, on four occasions he acts decisively and swiftly : he successfully stages a play wherein he catches the conscience of the King; he kills Polonius; he foils the King's English plan and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths, and he does at long last kill Claudius, too.

The killings of Polonius and the King are sporadic, impulsive acts through which his repressed energies find an outlet—not inappropriate in a man infected with a deep aversion. The other two exploits—the staging of the Mousetrap and frustrating the King's attempt to get him killed in England—are products of both sudden impulse and hard thinking, 'rashness' as well as cool deliberation. It is to be noted that in both these adventures he escapes out of the corrupt world of Denmark, and his aversion is temporarily under an eclipse. In producing the play he is his trueself; we get a glimpse of Hamlet as he was before his mother's marriage, an accomplished poet-producer and a penetrating critic, an aesthete in the best sense of the word. Again, while on board the ship bound for England, he has at last come away from Denmark to a new world where for a moment he is not haunted by memories of his mother's sin, where he is not dreadfully attended by bad dreams. The joy of the escape and the vigour of the action in both these operations are the obverse side

of the aversion induced by his experiences in the corrupt society of Denmark.

II

(*i*)

A running survey of the play will show how its descriptions, incidents and character-portraiture all serve to radiate a meaning beyond what is directly stated. In the first scene of the First Act, we meet what is supposed to be the Ghost of King Hamlet coming to visit his kingdom in the armour he wore when 'he the ambitious Norway combated'. As there is intensive preparation for yet another engagement with Norway, it is naturally presumed that the visitation of the old King in arms has something to do with the impending political and military crisis. But the Ghost's reticence, his countenance more in sorrow than in anger, Horatio's conjecture that the Ghost, dumb to them, will speak to Hamlet, point in a different direction; it is Hamlet's private world rather than affairs of the state that the play will be about. And in the ncxt scene, we have a glimpse of this private world, of Hamlet's disgust with his surroundings. In the state of mind in which we find Hamlet, he has uneasy premonitions which are excited by the announcement about his father's spirit. His immediate reaction is characteristic. Horatio might call it an illusion, he himself might toy with the idea that it is a spirit that has assumed his father's form, but as soon as he meets the Ghost, all his doubts vanish. 'I'll', says he, 'call thee Hamlet,/ King, father; royal Dane, O ! answer me' (I. iv. 44-5). And later on he also assures his sceptical friend that it is an honest ghost, that is to say, it is his father's spirit and not 'a goblin damn'd.' But the initial doubts are not without significance; they reappear and throw new light on the instability of a mind infected with an aversion for life. This in outline is the mental condition we are expected to visualize. Hamlet is warm-hearted to his friends, treasures the memory of his dead father whom he idealizes as Hyperion, and he makes love in honourable fashion to a girl who by birth is inferior to him. But all his warmth or

idealism has been blasted by his mother's 'frailty'; after all, he is her son. That he is deeply in love with life is shown by the fact that his chief objection to suicide is his attachment to the flesh which he cannot bear to see melt, thaw and dissolve itself into a dew. His flesh is at the same time 'solid' and 'sullied'. This is an obstacle which his aversion overcomes but from this it also receives a new direction. Here is a sickness of life which has been brought on by the realization of a hereditary taint.

The first effect of the encounter with the Ghost is that it unsettles Hamlet who suddenly decides on assuming madness which, however, hinders rather than helps him in wreaking vengeance. This motif, borrowed by Shakespeare from his sources, is utilized by him for his own dramatic purposes. Although it is only a pretence, it enables Hamlet to express his deep disgust with life and thus prevents the heart-break he fears. His deep aversion, which is very near to madness, expresses itself in 'wild and whirling' speech and action. Even the Ghost catches the infection of this craziness and acts in an erratic, whimsical way much as Puck of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* might do. Some critics find in the Ghost's conduct here support for their view that it is really 'a goblin damn'd' and that Hamlet's later doubts are justified. No such inference need be made; we are only to note the 'appropriateness' of the Ghost's conduct, for he just matches Hamlet's extravagant speech and action with his own impishness. If the Devil can assume any shape it likes, the father's spirit, unsubstantial as the air, should also have the power to adopt some of the Devil's tricks and tactics, and Shakespeare is within his rights as a dramatist to take this little liberty with demonology. He takes greater liberties with history.

The Ghost, whom Hamlet accepts as his father's spirit in arms, is serious about two things: Horatio and Marcellus must be sworn to secrecy, for if they blabber, Claudius will be on his guard and the mission will be foiled. Not that the Ghost says so clearly but that is the implication of his eagerness to swear them to secrecy. And the son must not forget his duty. Hamlet's boisterous protestations and his somewhat comical requisitioning of his tables to aid his memory suggest, even at this early stage,

that his will has to be prodded into action if the Ghost's command is to be obeyed. Some modern critics go too far when they say that the command is evil, and by not carrying it out Hamlet really fights his way out of Hell.[4] He does not rebel against the command; he just forgets it and this forgetfulness is underlined all through the play.

In giving an account of the situation in Denmark, Shakespeare has the same reliance on the suggestive power of language and exercises the same command of 'indirections' as in his portraiture of the encounter between Hamlet and the Ghost. He does not make any plain statement about the state of affairs or about the law of succession in Denmark. The country has a competent ruler in Claudius, who can handle a difficult situation with firmness, is suave to his courtiers and advisers, and seems to be as much alive to the claims of the state as to his personal interests. But the studied rhetoric of his address and his silken urbanities point to a few uncomfortable conjectures that will gain in weight as the play proceeds. It was an all too brief courtship that led to an incestuous marriage between a man and his widowed sister-in-law. Were they lovers during the first husband's lifetime ? It is also suggested that the new King came to the throne not by virtue of a natural right of succession but with the help of the better wisdoms of a handful of courtiers whose opinions he could sway. He has before him the sulky son of the old King whom he nominates as his heir but he does not allow the heir-apparent to leave the court because here alone his own authority and influence are undoubted. Hamlet himself, however, is as indifferent to Claudius getting the throne in preference to him as to the promise with which Claudius crams him. He does not mention the matter in soliloquies or conversation, neither does the Ghost, who understands his son, make may reference to the supersession of Hamlet.

(ii)

The initial fears about Hamlet's ability to carry out his mission are quickened in the Second Act, because here, until towards the end, he is silent about the Ghost and revenge. On the other

hand, his aversion has deepened, and it is sugestive that he is awakened out of his aimlessness and torpor by a very trivial incident, unconnected with his mission—an actor simulating the passion of Hecuba. He now thinks of testing the revelation of the Ghost, who might have been a devil that assumed a pleasing shape to deceive and damn him. But till now Hamlet has never been in two minds about the Ghost's reliability, and the first part of the soliloquy, in which he blames himself for remissness, contradicts the second part where he is troubled by doubts about the Ghost's 'honesty'. The staging of the drama really gives him an opportunity of walking out of the prison of Denmark into the world of imagination, and the prospect of exposing Claudius and scoring a moral triumph over him is itself an exhilarating temptation.

The Second Act is taken up less with the duty of revenge than with Hamlet's relations with Ophelia and his reactions to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's espionage. Hamlet's attitude to Ophelia seems to be obscure and riddled with contradictions. But the difficulty is lessened if we look upon her as an Excitant or Determinant (*vibhāva*) of the mental state of Aversion. Virtuous as she certainly is, she yet repels his letters, denies him access and afterwards returns his presents, blandly laying the blame on him. Hamlet sees in her the image of his mother, of the Frailty whose name is woman. She, too, in her own way, has taken off the rose from the fair forehead of an innocent love. Thus his castigation of Ophelia enables him to forget a task his inner self knows to be pointless and to harp on his real tragedy—his mother's adultery and incest.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are very different from Ophelia, but they too excite and nourish the mental state of Aversion. They cannot be called ordinary spies; till the last they have no idea of the King's crime or of the true nature of the errand they have been entrusted with. Their chief offence is that they have tried to conceal the fact that they were sent for. But more revolting than any act of crime is their woodenness, their lack of understanding, their deficiency in fellow-feeling. As Dowden points out, their smiling for whatever cause at Hamlet's confes-

sion of a soured attitude to the earth and the sky, to man and to woman is a measure of their intelligent sympathy![5] They attribute his melancholy to frustrated ambition and do not realize that he would be cheerfully confined within a nutshell and consider himself a king of infinite space, were it not that he had bad dreams. What these dreams are nobody understands; Gertrude, Ophelia and Polonius, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are equally insensible. In this way love and ambition and friendship and moral idealism are all turned to dust and ashes, and the mental state of Aversion is presented as a tangled web.

Even his assumed madness assists us in focusing our gaze on this mental state. To Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he makes it clear that he is not really mad, that he can know a hawk from a handsaw. Thus he himself dissipates the veil he has put on, which shows that it is only an offshoot of his mental condition. Under cover of it, he can rail at the world; his aversion can mock the meat it feeds on. What is equally important is the pleasure he derives from this mockery. It produces even in his deep melancholy a feeling of self-complacency, and he can conveniently forget a task that will give no satisfaction to his lacerated spirit.

(*iii*)

The Third Act contains several items : (1) the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, (2) Hamlet's admonition to Ophelia, (3) his accosting of Horatio, (4) the Mousetrap, (5) Hamlet's sparing the King at prayer, and (6) his haranguing of Gertrude. In what may be described as a preamble (i. 49-54), there is the King's confession which is a reminder to the audience that the staging of the Mousetrap is unnecessary. Hamlet's meditation on being and not-being and on suicide and his brutalities to Ophelia reveal that his pessimism has touched the nadir, but they show, too, that the dramatic experiment he has undertaken proceeds from the periphery of his consciousness and not its centre which is otherwise occupied. Another thing worth noting is that the content of his famous soliloquy—'To be or not to be'—is in striking contrast to the sentiments he expressed earlier on the subject of suicide. He does not now think of the

dissolution of the flesh or the canon of the Everlasting and not even, directly, of his mother's sin. It is the insoluble ethical-metaphysical problem of taking or not taking arms against a sea of troubles that makes him side into a consideration of suicide as a remedy against earthly ills. And the deterrent now is neither aesthetic repugnance nor any religious scruple but fear of the unknown, which has been sharpened by his meeting with the Ghost. As a spirit his father can visit airy regions, which Hamlet poetically calls 'the glimpses of the moon', but he cannot return to *terra firma* as a man amongst men; he cannot even make a revelation about the prison-house that encloses him now. That is why in spite of his fleeting visit which only brings out the depth of our ignorance about his new abode, Hamlet justifiably describes the world of the dead as an undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller ever returns to earth.

The encounter with Ophelia shows the same preoccupation with universal problems, the same probing into fundamentals. His idealism shines forth in his first greeting of his lady-love : 'The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember'd' (III. i. 89-90). Ophelia's cold and formal reply—'How does your honour for this many a day ?'—sends him back to his pessimism and he pours forth his warth on humanity. But behind his vitriolic hatred of women, we see unmistakable glimpses of his romantic love. He ascribed his own lofty notion of love also to his father who was so devoted to his mother 'That he might not beteem the winds of heaven / Visit her face too roughly' (I. ii. 141-2). But as that did not protect her from sinning, the safest thing for his own lady-love Ophelia would be to get herself to a nunnery where she would be immune from contamination.

From Ophelia to Horatio there is a change from a prison-house to fresh air, as it were, but here, too, there is the same implication, though it is conveyed in a different way. Hamlet wants to wear Horatio in his heart's core, because in Horatio blood and judgement are commingled in equal measure; he is 'A man that fortune's buffets and rewards / Hast ta'en with equal thanks' (III· ii. 72-3), In this encomium, there is a appraisal as well as

emulation. But Horatio, we know, has never urged him to vengeance, never, after the terrible encounter, even mentioned the Ghost. Indeed, his 'cool reason' has been as useless for Hamlet as Ophelia's innocence. Secondly, do we not also notice in this extravagant praise of a friend who is impervious to excitement a secret desire to escape from the Ghost's command and to suffer nothing in suffering all ?

The play within the play, though unnecessary for the story, throws light on the mental condition imaged through Hamlet, It gives him a holiday from his cynicism, his world-weariness is replaced by the ecstasy of creation, and it enables him also to forget not only the Ghost's command but also the corrupt world of Denmark which has made him mad. What is equally significant is that this play within the play gives him the only kind of revenge he relishes. The fit of hilarity which seizes him at the successful termination of the venture expresses not only a sense of artistic triumph but also a feeling that his main task is over; he has caught the conscience of the King. With a similar intention he now proceeds to chastise his mother and hold the glass up to her mind. If he can awaken her conscience, that would be a consummation devoutly to be wished.[6]

It is worth noting that as soon as Hamlet has fully exposed the King, he equally completely forgets his earlier resolve to follow it up with action, which is one more proof, if further proof were necessary, that doubts about the Ghost had nothing to do with Hamlet's tardiness. He soon finds the defenceless King kneeling at prayer before him but spares him on the ground that if he kills him in the purgation of his soul, Claudius will go to heaven. This would be hire and salary, not revenge. Although we may take him at his word and grant that he sincerely believes in what he says at this moment, it is to be noted that he does not advance any such argument either before or after this occasion. And possibly it is with reference to such jugglery that he will very soon accuse himself of 'thinking too precisely on the event' (IV. iv. 41). What is equally relevant is that when he kills Polonius, he simply says that he took the intruding fool for his better; there is not a word of regret that he has missed his mark again. He

calmly accepts the King's order that he must go to England and there is even a sense of superiority that he can see a cherub that sees the King's purposes. He does not stop to think that this banishment will delay and even frustrate his revenge. The state of Aversion hugs everything that will help it to perpetuate itself.

(*iv*)

In the Fourth Act, Shakespeare, as is well known, portrays Hamlet's mental state by contrasting him with Fortinbras and Laertes, who do not brood or argue but act and act in a forthright manner. What is not often realized is that in this Act Hamlet's disgust with life is in the process of being rarefied into a kind of philosophical detachment, in which vengeance, however he might nerve himself for it, will sound somewhat unreal. For him now death seems to be the only reality, and man, the paragon of animals, exists to be just food for worms. There is very little difference between a fat king and a lean beggar, who are 'variable service; two dishes, but to one table : that's the end' (IV. iii. 24-7).

The thought of revenge has now receded into the background but it is always there and can be stirred up even by a straw—as much by an actor's simulated passion as by the sight of two armies facing imminent death 'for a fantasy or a trick of fame'. In moods of self-introspection, Hamlet analyses the causes of his failure to carry out the Ghost's command. At one stage he thought that he was not sufficiently passionate, that he lacked gall to make oppression bitter. But soon after he half-unconsciously blamed himself for excess of passion and looked wistfully to Horatio in whom he found reason or judgement and passion commingled in the right proportion. But even the clear demonstration of the King's guilt in the Play scene failed to evoke the appropriate response from him; it did not bring him an inch nearer the fulfilment of his mission. When he went to visit his mother, he had bloody thoughts by which he himself was partly appalled, "Tis now the very witching time of night', said he, '...now could I drink hot blood,/And do such bitter business as the day/Would quake to look on' (III. ii. 413 ff). Are we not

to conclude that the bitter bloody business that the Ghost imposed on him would not stand the dry light of reason which is symbolized by day ?

It is to reason that Hamlet appeals in the great solioquy provoked by the sight of Fortinbras's army marching towards Poland. But his argument is shot through and through with irony. He would not allow his capacity for large discourse and his godlike reason to fust in him unused. Reason demands the equivalence of cause and effect, and he persuades himself that a father murdered and a mother stained are sufficient excitements of his reason as also of his blood. But the immediate 'occasion' that informs against him gives the lie to this conclusion so far as reason may be a motive for action. The two armies that have gathered are not guided by any rational calculation when they expose themselves to death and danger even for an egg-shell. They are driven by a fantasy or a trick of fame, which by its intensity, becomes a divine ambition that gives greatness to the quarrel about a straw. Thus the soliloquy which began with an appeal to reason ends with an invocation to passion :

> O ! from this time forth,
> My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth !
> (IV. iv. 65-6)

Here he comes very near to a confession that the commandment, which alone lives within the book and volume or his brain from where it has wiped away all other interests, is not itself rationally tenable.

(*v*)

According to Indian poetics, the secret of poetic beauty lies in the suggestion of a second meaning to which the plain, stated meaning subordinates itself. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare makes a very novel use of this method, because here towards the end of the play there are at least two direct statements which, though somewhat perplexing at first sight, reinforce the meaning conveyed indirectly in the earlier Acts. First, Hamlet makes a categorical statement about his deep love for Ophelia, which was greater than the love of forty thousand brothers. This avowal of

love is hard to reconcile with his cruel treatment of her in the earlier portions of the play and the absence of any reference to her in his soliloquies. That he does not mention Ophelia in the soliloquies may be explained away on the ground that when he is alone he thinks only of his mother's sinful life and the duty he has not been able to perform. He does, indeed, speak very cruelly to Ophelia, but as has already been suggested, these brutalities proceed from an idealized image of love which his mother has destroyed and Ophelia has done nothing to restore. It is because he loves her more intensely than any brother could that he wants that she keep clear of the corrupting influences of the world where even the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog. This deep involvement in love will be brought out indirectly if we compare his attitude to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with his attitude to Ophelia. The ridicule he pours on the two spies is different from his castigation of Ophelia. To them he speaks from a distance, as it were, because they are not near his conscience, but his torturing of Ophelia is a form of self-laceration.

There is another direct statement in the Fifth Act which helps to support and strengthen hints thrown out in the earlier part of the play. This is about Hamlet's age which is now definitely fixed at thirty, thus countering the impression of a very youthful Hamlet produced in the First Act of the play. Hamlet visibly grows before our eyes into maturity, and this development is consolidated in the careful calculation given in the Fifth Act. This also confirms the view that in spite of the apparently swift march of events a good deal of time has elapsed and Hamlet has failed to wreak vengeance.

Corresponding to the passing of time, there is a sea-change in Hamlet's attitude. Despair itself has become mild; aversion has deepened into resignation; aggressive melancholy has been coloured by serenity and detachment. And we have on the whole a more philosophical Prince. The aesthete who delighted in holding the mirror up to nature is now anxious to explore the nature of reality and finds that the basic truth of life is that Alexander, however great he might be, died and was buried and thus returned to earth; of earth we make loam, and of that loam, where-

to he was converted, we might stop a beer-barrel. Horatio thinks it would be to consider too curiously, to consider so; this is partly because it is a novel attitude to which Horatio has not been accustomed so far. But this is the dominant note of the Fifth Act, this tendency to get at the truth behind appearances, which is reflected even in the comments of the blundering Clowns, one of whom concludes an absurd argument with the penetrating remark, 'Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.' (V. i. 25-7) The Clowns play at loggats with the bones of the dead, because they have no feeling of their business. Hamlet's bones ache to think of it, but had he a feeling of his own business when his conduct drove Ophelia to madness and death? That is the implicit irony of the scene with Gravediggers.

When Hamlet returns to Elsinore in a detached, resigned mood, he has forgotten his father and also the mission he was entrusted with. It is only a casual remark of Horatio that makes him remember his duty to punish the King. Even here the King's old crime does not seem to be an adequate cause of action; he has to support it with two personal injuries : 'Popp'd in between the election and my hopes, /Thrown out his angle for my proper life, / And with such cozenage' (V. ii. 65-7). There was no sign previously that he ever cared for the succession or that he set much value on his own life. He makes no use of the short time he has at his disposal—'the interim is mine'—and the initiative easily passes on to the enemy. When at last he does kill the King, it is only to punish him for his recent treachery; he does not remember his father, and only the *double entente* of the word 'union' calls back to his mind the adulterous, incestuous relationship which was at the root of his tragedy. When in the grip of death, he importunes Horatio to report his cause aright. But does he himself know it aright? Very soon he tones down his request and only asks him to tell Fortinbras of 'the occurents, more or less, / Which have solicited ../', and appropriately, his last words are : 'The rest is silence' (V. II. 371-2).

Hamlet is not a play about a mission delayed and never executed in the proper sense of the term. Even the portrait of a great

character is only a means to an end. The play really envisages a complex and profound state of the soul in which Aversion is compounded with many other states. It is the penetrating vision of life with its sweetness and bitterness, heroism and villainy, love and hatred, laughter and sorrow, idealism and cynicism that accounts for its enduring poetic appeal. Combining concepts of Eastern and Western poetics, we may say that in *Hamlet* we are face to face with the state of Aversion, which assimilates and absorbs all other emotions, ideas and impulses and gives us an intense realization of truth, and it is also tragic because through the interaction of Plot and Character it shows both the grandeur and the futility of human thought, feeling and endeavour.

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

V.K. Chari, Ph.D., is Professor of English, Carleton University, Canada. Author of *Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism* (Nebraska, 1964), he has lately published several papers on Indian poetics besides a full-length study, *Sanskrit Criticism : An Essay in Literary Semantics.*

V. N. Dhavale, D. Phil. (Oxon), has been, for many years, Professor and Head of the Department of English, Fergusson College, Poona, where he served also as its Principal from 1968 to 1971. He writes both in English and Marathi. His book, *Walt Whitman*, has been published by Tata McGraw–Hill.

Sisir Kumar Ghose, D. Phil., has been Professor and Head of the Department of English, Visvabharati University, Santiniketan. A noted scholar and thinker, he has written widely on literery, social, cultural, aesthetic and philosophical topics. Amongst his publications are *Aldous Huxley, The Later Poems of Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore* (Sahitya Akademi, 1986), *The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo, Metaesthetics and Other Essays, Mystics and Society, Modern* and *Otherwise* and *Lost Dimensions*. He has also contributed, twice, the article on 'Mysticism' to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

V. K. Gokak, who was till recently President of Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters), is a well-known Scholar and educationist. He has been Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University and Director of Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, and Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. He has received several honours and awards including *Padmashree* and the degree of D. Litt *(Honoris Causa)* from Karnataka University and the University of Pacific, U. S. A. His books in English include *English in India : Its Present and Future, Poetic Approach to Language, Coleridge's Aesthetics, Sri Aurobindo : Seer and Poet,*

and *An Integral View of Poetry : An Indian Perspective* (New Delhi : Abhinav Publications, 1975), from which the present essay has been extracted. Professor Gokak holds also an eminent place in Kannada literature. His book of Kannada poems, *Dyāvā-Prithvī*, was selected for the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, D. Litt, is one of the foremost Indian scholars of English. He has been Professor and Head of the Department of English, and later Vice-Chancellor, of Andhra University, Waltair. He has also served as Visiting Professor at the University of Leeds, and participated in numerous conferences and seminars held in India and abroad. His vast literary output comprises biographical studies, literary history and criticism, short stories, playlets and poetry. *Lytton Strachey : A Critical Study* (1938), *Sri Aurobindo* (1945), *Gerard Manley Hopkins ; The Man and Poet* (1948), *Indian Writing in English* (1962), *The Adventure of Criticism* (1962), *Shakespeare : His World and His Art* (1964), and *Sītāyana : Epic of the Earth-born* (1987) are some of his notable works.

V. Y. Kantak has been Professor of English language and literature at M. S. University, Baroda, Himachal Pradesh University, Simla, and the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad. He was invited twice to read a paper at the International Shakespeare Conference at Stratford, and was elected Life Fellow of the International Institute of Arts and Letters, Sw tzerland. He has published several papers, one of which, 'An Approach to Shakespearean Tragedy', has appeared in *Shakespeare Survey 16*.

Kapil Kapoor, Ph. D., is Associate Professor of English, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is a perceptive scholar and linguist. One of his papers, 'Metaphor in Sanskrit and English Criticism', has appeared lately n the *Journal of Literary Criticism* (II:2).

M. S. Kushwaha, Ph.D., is a senior member of the English faculty, Lucknow University Lucknow. A noted scholar of

Sanskrit, Dr. Kushwaha has published a voluminous Hindi commentary on *Laghusiddhānta-Kaumudī* (a well-known text of Sanskrit grammar), which has been widely acclaimed by Sanskrit scholars, and awarded a literary prize by the U.P. Government. He is also a recognised Byron scholar. His book, *Byron and the Dramatic Form* (Salzburg, 1980) is included by *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature* in its essential 'Reading List' on Byron. His other publications, besides papers, include *English Research in India* (Lucknow, 1972), *Glimpses of Indian Research in English Literature* (Sterling, 1984), and an annotated edition of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (Macmillan, 1982).

K. Ayyappa Paniker, Ph.D., is Professor and Head, Institute of English, Kerala University, Trivandrum. He is not only an eminent scholar of English but also a leading poet and critic of Malayalam, in which his three collections of poems and and one collection of critical essays have already appeared. He has also translated numerous poems and stories from Malayalam. Amongst his books in English are *A short History of Malayalam Literature, Manjari S. Isvaran, K. M. Panikkar, Selected Poems* (translations from Malayalam), *Literary Studies, English and India, Indian Renaissance*, and *Vallathol : A Centenary Perspective.*

R. S. Pathak, Ph.D., D. Litt., is Professor and Head of the Department of English, Dr. H.S. Gour University, Sagar (M.P.). He has done valuable research on the *Vakrokti* school of Indian poetics. One of his papers, 'The Reality of Poetics and the Poetics of Reality', has appeared in the *Journal of Literary Criticism* (II:2).

Krishna Rayan has been Professor and Head of the Department of English, Bayere University, Nigeria. Amongst his publications are *Suggestion and Statement in Poetry* (University of London, 1972) and *Text and Sub-text* (Arnold-Heinemann, 1987) which have established him as an outstanding literary theoretician and critic.

P.S. Sastri, Ph.D., D. Litt., has been Professor and Head of the Department of English, Nagpur University, Nagpur. He is a ver-

satile scholar, and holds post-graduate degrees in Sanskrit, Telugu, Philosophy and English. He specializes in comparative aesthetics and critical theory. His books include *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Drama*, *Coleridge's Theory of Poetry*, *Ananda K. Coomaraswamy*, and *History of Literary Criticism*.

S. C. Sen Gupta, Ph.D., has been Professor and Head of of the Department of English at the universities of Jabalpur and Jadavpur. A distinguished Shakespearian scholar, Professor Sen Gupta has written on a wide range of subjects including culture, literary theory, and comparative aesthetics. Amongst his publications are *The Art of Bernard Shaw*, *Shakespcarian Comedy*, *Towards a Theory of Imagination*, *Great Sentinel : A Study of Rabindranath Tagore*, *Keats : From Theory to Poetry*, *The Whirlgig of Time : An Enquiry into the Problem of Duration in Shakespeare's Plays*, *Shakespeare's Historical Plays*, and *Aspects of Shakespearian Tragedy* (O. U. P.), from which the present essay is abstracted.

V. Venkata Subbaiah, M. Litt., teaches English at Besant Theosophical College, Madanapalle (A.P.). A keen student of comparative aesthetics, he has several papers to his credit.

A. C. Sukla, Ph.D., is Professor of English, Sambalpur University, Sambalpur. He is the author of *The Concept of Imitation in Greek and Indian Aesthetics* (Calcutta, 1977), and Founder-Editor of *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*.

G. B. Mohan Thampi, Ph.D., Dr. sc.phil. (Berlin), was till recently Professor and Head of the Department of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Now he is Vice-Chancellor, Kerala University, Trivandrum. He is a seasoned scholar and literary theoretician, and author of *The Response to Poetry : A Study in Comparative Aesthetics* (New Delhi : People's Publishing House, 1968), from which the present essay is extracted.